

# "Balancing the Christian Life", pt **1**

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*Growing Together in the Basics*

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From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church  
February and April 2016

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**Jesus Christ**  
Our Highest Calling  
Our Greatest Purpose  
Our Soul's Source and Joy  
And Our All Consuming Passion

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# "Balancing the Christian Life, Introduction"

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**Text:** John 3; Acts 16:31

*February 7, 2016*

**Theme:** "*Christianity*" what it means to be Christian

{ "..."including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ"  
-Romans 1:6 ESV }

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We are driven by five genetic needs: survival, love and  
belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

--William Glasser

## INTRODUCTION

This is intended to be a study on the basics of the Christian life; the foundational elements of the faith. Hebrews 6 indicates that there are some aspects of the faith that are more elementary and more basic than others. It is upon these basics and the foundations of faith that the deeper and weightier topics are built. A beautiful

building, is no better than the foundation upon which it is built, no matter how admirable the exterior may seem.

Some have explained the Christian life as being like a wagon wheel. Each element of faith is always present and working, but sometimes more weight is on one spoke of the wheel or on one element of the faith than the others. And while the wheel is always turning, Jesus Christ is always at the center of our life or should be.



Some of these “basics of the faith” might be; worship, prayer, giving, witnessing, church gatherings, solitude, obedience, fellowship, personal spiritual growth, Scripture, Service, Assurance, family, ministry and more. “Balancing the Christian Life” is all about growing together in these basics.

*The Christian Life has its beginning in Christ.*

## **BELIEVING**

*We start with a Review of faith in Christ (Jn.3:16).* Faith is the key and core of the Christian life. But not faith in general. Specific faith in Jesus Christ as God’s only Son and your only Savior.

## **Passive Faith**

The Christian faith involves passive faith which we might refer to as Undeniable Deduction. Everybody has faith in something, even

athiests. Athiests believe in no deity. Some believe this passively, while others believe it more actively.

**John 3:16** ESV "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever *believes* in him should not perish but have eternal life.

What you believe is what you consider to be true according to the knowledge and understanding you have received. It is this understanding that makes sense to you, when information and conviction come together.

### **12 noon or 12 midnight**

Imagine that in reality it is 12 noon where you are. But I come to you and tell you, "its 12 midnight". You check your watch and you look out the window. It is daylight outside and people are all over the place traveling from one place to another. People are working, running in the park, walking their dogs and grocery shopping.

All the information and evidence seems to disprove that, in fact, it is NOT 12 midnight. And that is what you believe. You can't help it. You can ignore it. You might choose to reject it. But you can't control it. This is passive faith and you experience this a thousand times a day, without even realizing it.

You come to an intersection and you have the green light. Most people don't even think about it, they just believe that the person with the red light will stop and give you the right of way. Or you come to a bridge on the interstate. It is a concrete bridge spanning a small body of water. You drive toward it and pass over it, never taking time to calculate whether or not you believe the bridge will hold the weight of your vehicle, much less the weight of all the

others which are also on the bridge. In your mind, the information you take in – the condition of the road, the height of the bridge, etc. is such that you don't even doubt for a second that the bridge is safe. Again, this is passive faith and we all have that in different areas and at different times.

**Rom 10:17** ESV "...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Faith happens when God brings information or data which is in our minds, and He helps us understand it. Along with that, the Holy Spirit opens the heart to spiritual Truth and somewhere *belief* begins to formulate. You can't control what you believe. You can deny it. You can reject it. You can ignore it. But you can't control it. Passive faith is not an act of the will nor can we control it.

At some point, what we have been taught in Church or read in the Bible makes sense to us, God is doing His work inside a person's heart and faith is born, or planted or begins growing. This is why those who were Jesus' disciples, and who were with Him day in and day out – as they watched him and listened to him – were in a process of beginning to believe. Then at the wedding in Cana in Galilee, Jesus performed the first of His miracles by turning the water into wine, He displayed His glory and the disciples *believed* in Him<sup>[Jn.2:11]</sup>. This was probably passive faith. They weren't trying to muster it up. The information, the evidence, His teaching and His miracles all came together – it all made sense and they believed. Probably not something they could control, it just happened.

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus gives the parable of the Sower. The sower sows the seed. The seed hits the soil and begins to grow in varying levels, based on the condition of the soil. But the seed

doesn't actively grow, it passively grows, because the growth process is determined by a force and conditions outside of itself. This might be an example of passive faith. Growth takes place without trying, is unintentional and happens whether it is desirable or not.

*The Christian Life also Involves...*

**Active Faith – Personal Responsibility (Acts 16:31)**

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were preaching the gospel and performing some gospel confirming miracles. They cast a demon out of a fortune telling girl. Her owners and the crowd were angered and Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. An earthquake occurred, opening the jail cell doors, causing their chains to fall off their hands and woke up the guard.

As a result of all this, the guard thought the prisoners had escaped and he prepared to take his own life, which is what would happen to him anyway, for sleeping and losing the prisoners. However Paul shouted to the man not to harm himself. Amazed and trembling, the man came to Paul and Silas and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"<sup>[Acts 16:30]</sup>

<p><b>Act 16:30-31</b> ESV Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (31) And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."</p>
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Believe and be saved. This was both a command and a promise. Allow the evidence to speak for itself and believe in Jesus.

**The CHAIR**

Passive faith sees a chair and says, "that is a chair and I believe it will hold me if I sit in it." We don't realize it, but this happens each and every time we sit down. We don't think about it, but we



believe it, because this is passive faith. The difference between passive faith and active faith is the difference between believing a chair will hold you and actually sitting and resting in the chair with all your weight.

If the chair is old, rotten, shakey antique, this process of trusting in the chair is slowed down to the speed that we realize what we're doing. We are thinking about it. We may examine the chair more closely. We may attempt to determine if all the dowels or nails are in place. What the information and evidence says to us, is what will cause us to believe if the chair will indeed hold our weight or not. If you truly believe the chair will hold you then you will sit down on it ( perhaps slowly and not immediately putting all your weight on the seat), then you rest full on it, relying and depending completely in the chairs ability to support your full weight.

This is active faith. This is the kind of faith Paul and Silas are urging the jailer to exercise. They did not instruct the jailer to be baptized or say so many prayers or do so many good deeds. He simply shared with them, how they were to effectively appropriate the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, *believe* and be saved..."

Active Faith involves acting on what you believe. It involves exercising active faith which fully rejects everything else and yet rests and relies fully on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross on our behalf.

*The Christian Life also Involves...*

**BELONGING -- Born again into God's Family**

When we come into this world, we are born into it physically. This is the first birth. But there is another birth – a second birth.

Scripture refers to it as being “born again” or being “born from above”.

*Belonging to a church meanings being...*

### **Born again into the family of God**

When you believe in Jesus, you are born again, into the spiritual life.

**Joh 3:1-8** ESV Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (2) This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." (3) Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (4) Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (5) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' (8) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

“Born again” can also mean *born from above*. Jesus contrasts the flesh and the spirit (v6) and mentions being born of the flesh (physically) and being born of the Spirit (v8) or the new birth of being born-again *spiritually*.

*The Christian Life Involves*

### **God's Family = Church Family** (Jn.1:12-13)

The family of God is made up of every believing Christian anywhere in the world. Some want to be born into God's family,

but want nothing to do with the church family. You can't. When you trust Christ, you are born into God's family, the church. In that spiritual family there are new spiritual brothers and sisters, and even spiritual moms and dads. The church is God's family. If you reject the church, you are rejecting God's family and I'd say, even God Himself, in some respects.

**Joh 1:9-13** ESV The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (11) He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (12) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children of God**, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is why, I believe it is important to refer to the church you attend as "*my church*". It doesn't mean you own or possess it or somehow control it. It is my church, because it is your spiritual family and it is where you belong. Your earthly family is your family. Don't hesitate to refer to your spiritual family as my church. That does not communicate ownership. It communicates belonging!

Through faith in Christ, we are born into God's family as His children. (v12)

## **BECOMING**

The Christian Life Involves *becoming* a new creation. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have been born again and can proclaim, "I am a New Creation."- This is all about being given a clean slate and a fresh start.

**2Cor. 5:17** ESV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Becoming a New Creation involves following Jesus, learning of Jesus, Trusting Jesus, obeying Jesus, and receiving forgiveness of sin, salvation of the soul, eternal life, a new journey, a different purpose, and a new identity. Through faith in Jesus Christ, I am a child of God.

### **You ARE a New Creation (2 Cor.5:17)**

The Christian life involves the fact that you are not merely *becoming* a new creation, you *are* a new creation. God has changed you. You can't look into a mirror and see this change. No camera can catch the transformation, but you are changed into a new creation – *immediately* - *NOW*.

### **T-Rex to Kitten**

When you come to faith in Christ a profound change takes place. Its like before, you were a T-Rex – growling, snarling, with an enormous mouth with super enormous teeth and even horrible T-Rex breath. But when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved, then you become a new creation. You are no longer that stinkie ole T-Rex. Now you are a little gentle kitten. That difference is the difference that has taken place in your life, because you are now a new creation, through faith in Jesus.

*The Christian Life Involves ...*

### **You are BECOMING a New Creation**

Practically speaking, this is an on-going process of growing into the person, God has already made you to be, if that makes sense.

**2Pet. 3:18** ESV But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Day by day, Christians are involved in an ongoing transformation we refer to as Sanctification. That means you are *being* changed, purged, and purified. God is changing your **ABCs**; that is your **A**ttitudes, your **B**ehavior and your **C**hoices. Every experience and every situation is an opportunity for God to mold you into the person He wants you to become.

You are now part of a life-long process of growing, developing, and maturing in the faith. People often look at Christians think they are *hypocrites*, because they believe one way but seem to live another way. But Christians are not perfect and hopefully none of us have claimed to be perfect. We are *ALL* a work in progress. We are growing and grappling with our faith. Yes – we believe a Christian should not sin, but we sometimes do. Sometimes more or less than other times.

People are not surprised when we see an out of shape person at the gymnasium. They don't say, "I'm never going back to that Gym again. Can you believe all those out of shape people there?"

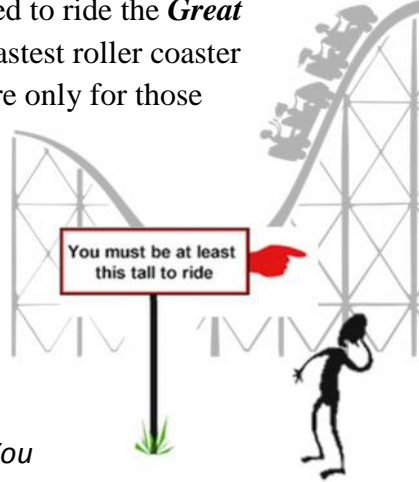
People are not offended to see broken cars at the mechanics shop. That is where cars need to go to be worked on.

People shouldn't be angered when they see sick people at the hospital. Neither should people be surprised to encounter imperfect Christians in the church. In fact some at church, may not even be a Christian.

Are we perfect? No. Are we striving daily to live pleasing to God? Certainly. Do we stumble along the way? Of course.

## You Must Be This Tall

Remember the carnivals as a kid? I wanted to ride the *Great American Scream Machine*. It was the fastest roller coaster in the South. But those kinds of rides were only for those who qualified to ride it. There was a measuring stick with a sign on it that read: “*You must be this tall to ride*”. How disappointing that was for those of us who did not measure up.



Can you image, if in our churches, you come up to the front door and there is a measuring stick with a sign that reads: “*You must be this good, to get in.*” A Christian in Church, struggling with and fighting against sin, is not a hypocrite. It’s called honesty. We have to understand that and accept, and love and come along those who are struggling and help them through the struggle and to fight the good fight.

Now some Christians may excuse their sin or maybe deny their sin. And that is not acceptable. And that may indeed be a hypocrite. All Christians must fight against sin in our lives, by confessing sin as sin, repenting from known sin, obeying God’s Word, and being disciplined and nurtured in our faith by others.

If you are not truly trusting in Jesus Christ as God’s only Son and your personal Savior, then I’d like to invite you to turn to the back of this book and read over the page on “**the ABC’s**” This will lead you through or perhaps just help you review your process of trusting in Jesus Christ.

God’s blessings to you as you grow in the Lord. God has great plans for you!



# "Acceptance, Security and Assurance of Salvation"

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**Text:** Eph.1; 2Cor.5:17;

*February 14, 2016*

**Theme:** "*Christianity*" what it means to be Christian

"I write these things to you who believe  
in the name of the Son of God that you **may know**  
that you have eternal life."

--1John 5:13 ESV

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Nothing can bring a real sense of security  
into the home except true love.

--Billy Graham

## INTRODUCTION

Many Christian seem to struggle with Assurance of their Salvation. This is common. But the issue is not, "whether or not you have been good enough" to be saved or to keep your salvation". *Now we got that out of the way.* The issue of Assurance is, "is your faith developed enough to trust God and to take Him at His Word?"

*In The Christian Life...*

## **WE HAVE ACCEPTANCE - In the Family of God**

Acceptance refers to being received with approval or to measure up.

### **We are Blessed in Christ (Eph.1:1-5)**

When “blessing” is directed to God, it is in reference to praise. For instance, “Bless the Lord oh, my Soul...”. But when it refers to a person being blessed, it is in reference to God making us undeserving recipients of His unmerited favor (blessing). It is something God does *for* us and something He gives *to* us.

**Eph 1:3-6** ESV Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Who has blessed us? God has blessed us. He has done this. God is responsible for this.

i.) “every spiritual blessing *in Christ*” (v3)

This is impossible to fully determine or innumerate what all the blessings we have as Christians, really are. But God had made us recipients of His favor or blessing in at least two areas here.

ii.) “He chose us in Christ before the world began” (v4)

Anyone around before the world began? You had nothing to do with that. This is something God has done *for* us and has given *to* us.



Who chose us? *God did*. When did God do this? *Before the world began*. We were not responsible for any of this. These are unmerited blessings to us, from God.

iii.) “He predestined us...through Christ according to the purpose of His will” (v5) HE has blessed us and brought us into His family, according to the purpose of His will. Not because of what we have done or what we might do, but because it was part of God’s plan before time began. This is all of God.

### **We are Reconciled to God in Christ (2 Cor.5:18**

Reconciled means we have been brought back into a right relationship with God, because of what Jesus did at the cross on our behalf.

**2Cor. 5:17-19** ESV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (18) *All this is **FROM GOD***, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

God has reconciled us to Him. It is what He has done *for* us and what He has given *to* us.

Our sin has separated us from God. Sin is the separating factor (Is.59:2). But when Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, he paid for our sins and provided forgiveness and salvation. Our sin debt was removed, therefore our sin barrier which separated us from God was removed. As a result, we were reconciled to God through faith in Christ or we were reunited peacefully with God.

When two people have a falling out, they sometimes need a counselor or a mediator to help work through their problems and mend their broken relationships and help reconcile the two parties. Jesus is God's Mediator for us.

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

Jesus is the One and only Mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus. No other human is needed. We have all we need in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We have access to Jesus and He provides us with access to the throne of our Holy God.

### **We are Accepted in Christ (Eph.1:6**

Acceptance means to be openly received with no requirement being unmet. And Ephesians 1 states that we are "Blessed or Accepted In the Beloved".

**Eph 1:6** ESV (6) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed (accepted) us in the Beloved.

As a Christian, behavior matters to God. But becoming and being part of God's family is not about being accepted due to your behavior, as though you were or could be good enough. Being Accepted means Christ has made us acceptable to God.

God has made us to be undeserving recipients of His unmerited favor. It is something He has done *for* us and something He has given *to* us.

## **SECURITY**

We have security in the family of God. Because we are Accepted

by God in Christ, we also have security in God's family. Some have termed it as "Eternal Security".

**Joh 1:12 ESV** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to *become children of God*,

This is not dependent upon us or what we might do, but is fully dependent upon Christ and what he has done and accomplished for us. Through faith in Christ, God has given to us the right to become part of His family. It is what *He* has done *for* us.

### **God allows us into His family (2Cor.5:18)**

This is God way of providing us with access into His family. It is God who invites us and allows us to be part of His family. And it is He who keeps us in that relationship.

**Joh 1:12 MKJV** But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name,

Where does this new life come from? It comes from God. Who allows us entrance into God's family? God does.

### **God Ensures Us**

Ephesians gives us an interesting perspective on the security that God offers those who are truly part of His family.

**Eph 1:11-14 ESV** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our

**inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

v.13) “sealed” or secured by the Holy Spirit. When we become part of God’s family, he makes a security deposit inside us, that being His indwelling Holy Spirit. This is something like an engagement ring signifying the certain union to come. It is also like making a down payment on a house. A house might have the price tag of \$100,000 and you pay a security deposit of \$10,000 to hold the house in your name.

God deposits the Holy Spirit into the believer as a security measure, guaranteeing that person is part of His family. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance to come. “Wait a minute, I thought once we trusted Christ we received life everlasting and a home in heaven?” That is correct. But there is a future fulfillment of our salvation, which is our full reception of the eternal promise we have been given. That is when we are home with the Lord and in our eternal dwelling. This is ultimately our eternal inheritance. And the Holy Spirit is God’s seal, and guarantee and deposit – not until we mess up and lose our salvation, but until that day of complete redemption and inheritance,(v.14) in Gods’ eternal home.  
[Jn.14:1-4]

## **ASSURANCE**

In the family of God, we have Assurance. He wants us assured of our Salvation. Ron Hutchcraft has used this illustration. How would you respond if someone asked you if you were married? “Well that’s a good question, lets kick that around a bit.” Or “Well I hope so. I think I am. I was yesterday, I hope I still am.” “I guess you can’t really know for sure.”

## God wants us SURE!

That sounds absurd right? But when it comes to assurance of our salvation, those are the answers many people give. Never really sure of that all-important eternal relationship.

This is how young believers often respond. This is also how young children and sometimes much older adults may respond – “I’m just not sure.” But God wants you sure. Read this.

**1Jn 5:10-14** ESV Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. (11) And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (13) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (14) And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

God wants us to know that we’re saved. He wants us to be sure we are forgiven. He wants us to evidence Assurance when it comes to our relationship with Him and that we belong to Him.

## God wants us Certain

God wants us confident in our relationship with Him and in our service for Him. Notice the Assurance built into this passage in John 10.

**Joh 10:27-30** ESV My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (28) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (29)

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (30) I and the Father are one."

No one can snatch us out of His hand. In case we weren't certain, this is stated twice. And yet some people read this and then argue, "but You can". In other words, "No one can snatch you out of God's hand, but you can." That is how some believe.

I recently did some in depth research on this phrase. I looked into the original New Testament Greek language and I discovered something very interesting. In the Greek, "No One", actually means "**No One**". Isn't that earth shattering. God wants us sure.

**Assurance of Salvation is based on these:**

**1) THE HOLY WORD OF GOD:** is crucial to Assurance in the faith. God's word contains His promises regarding salvation and our relationship with God.

**2) THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD :** is central to imparting to us assurance in the faith.

**Rom 8:16** ESV The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

We understand that the Holy Spirit burdens us in prayer. He also convicts us of our sin. We understand the Holy Spirit of God is the One who calls us or moves us to a ministry or a mission field. These are deep impressions or sense of need or purpose or direction.

**1Co 2:9-13** ESV But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"-- (10) these things God has revealed to us

through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (11) For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (13) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

It is the Holy Spirit who teaches and enlightens us in a given area. The Holy Spirit convinces us and fosters assurance of our salvation.

**3) THE KEEPING POWER OF OUR HOLY GOD:** is crucial to our assurance in the faith.

**1Pet. 1:3-5** ESV Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, *he has caused* us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, *kept in heaven for you*, (5) who *by God's power are being guarded* through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Who has caused us to be born again? God has.(v.3) Who keeps our inheritance safe in heaven? God does.(v.4) Whose power guards our own salvation? God's power guards our salvation.(v5)

God has made us to be undeserving recipients of His unmerited favor. It is something He has done *for* us and something He has given *to* us.

**I am convinced of this:**

**1) THE ASSURANCE OF A TRUE** believer takes time to develop.

**2) THE LEVEL OF ASSURANCE** of a true believer depends on your level of knowledge and faith in God's Holy Word, the Bible. Assurance of your salvation is NEVER – EVER dependent upon how you feel about things. IT never depends on whether or not you feel saved – however that is supposed to feel.

**3) THE ASSURANCE OF A GENUINE CHRISTIAN** boils down to this: Do you or do you not believe God's Word and His promises? Believing the Bible doesn't mean you fully understand it all, but that you believe it all. Whoever claims to know all the answers and has God all figured out- is either lying or they have a different God than the One of Holy Scripture.

**Rom 11:33-34 KJV** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

**1Co 2:16 KJV** For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

**Is. 40:13 (NIV)** Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor?

Knowledge grows over time. Understanding grows over time. Faith grows over time. And Assurance of our Salvation grows over time.



## **FALSE BELIEVERS AND CHRISTIANS LIVING IN SIN**

Just because we are afraid someone will feel that once they are saved and in God's family, they will live anyway they want to live, doesn't mean we chose to teach something that isn't true.

That is a genuine concern. But it is NOT a reason to deny the Assurance, Acceptance and Security we have in Christ. I believe this: whoever claims to understand God – I mean fully, conclusively in all areas and on all points – that is a person who has redefined God into something or someone we can figure out and understand, and stripped Him of His majesty and mystery.

### **Let the Scriptures speak for themselves**

Trust and Allow God to work, dispense grace, discipline, chastise and purify His own. And He will! If a person cannot be Eternally Secure, I don't see how he or she can ever be fully Assured of their salvation.

Those who claim you can lose your salvation have to formulate their own boundaries and their own measurement for how good a person has to be, in order to keep the salvation and how bad they have to be in order to lose their salvation. And who makes those guidelines? *They do.*

The line for people who can lose their salvation is just below their own lifestyle or level of sinful struggles. To be sure of your salvation you have to be at least as good as they are or better. For those folks, they are OK, but if you're worse than they are, then you must have lost your salvation.

**"Grace is a gift for the wretched,  
not a reward for the righteous." -- Martin Luther**

## Reasons for Christians Living in Sin

It is never acceptable for a Christian to live like a Non-Christian. Some say that it is impossible for a true Christian to live in ongoing sin. I say, that is certainly not so.

In 1 Cor. Paul is correcting and rebuking a sinful church. He doesn't instruct them to get saved, but to repent from their sinful living. In the book of James – the author is rebuking a sinful group of Christians. He doesn't tell them to trust Jesus all over again, but to repent.

When Jesus writes to the 7 churches in Revelation, he doesn't tell them to be Born Again, all over again. He tells them to *repent* from their sins or shortcomings.

### <sup>(1)</sup> SEARED CONSCIENCE

1Tim. 4:1-2 ESV Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from “*the faith*” by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, (2) through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,

The faith is not lost salvation. But a cultural rejection of any of the traditional components of the Christian faith. This seems specifically referring to unbelieving people. More like a culture, society or a nation slowly becoming more and more pagan and resilient to the message of God's word and the working of God's Spirit in convicting and drawing men. It doesn't say they were once believers, but then lost their salvation. It simply implies they were “religious”

### <sup>(2)</sup> CHRISTIANS CAN GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT –

Eph 4:26-30 ESV Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and give no opportunity to the devil.

(28) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

### **(3) FAILURE TO REALISTICALLY CONSIDER THEIR OWN SINS.**

Those who believe you can lose your salvation, have an unrealistic view of themselves. They seem to feel that they are more righteous and able to keep salvation. They also have a gross misunderstanding of the natural depravity of mankind, which still is part of the human nature of the True, believing Christian.

**“People who lack Assurance need *Re*Assurance from those who do have Assurance.”**

In our earlier Christian life, the awareness of personal sin often makes us doubt our salvation. We should be keenly aware of the struggle against sin, and it should cause us concern, but we should also be keenly aware of God's ability to keep us in His family. Our struggle should cause us to take personal spiritual inventory, which should include reflecting on His grace and His keeping power.

**You are Accepted, Secured  
and Assured, in Christ**

We are saved by Grace through faith<sup>[Eph.2:8]</sup>, and we are kept secure by God's same grace. Faith is built on familiarity and personal

relational experience. You trust or distrust a person because you have gotten to know them. You know how they work, how they live, how they treat others, whether or not they keep their word or make good on their promises.

Faith in God is the same way. Through Scripture, faith and personal experience, we have gotten to know God. We know somewhat of how He works, how He treats us, whether or not He keeps His word or makes good on His promises.

The more you get to know God, through Scripture, prayer and His personal, involvement in your life, the more your faith will grow and the greater your Assurance in the Faith will grow. There are no magic spells or short cuts.

God has made us to be undeserving recipients of His unmerited favor. It is something He has done *for* us and something He has given *to* us.

### **CONSIDER THIS:**

1. If you struggle with Assurance of your Salvation, then you are probably saved and need time for your faith to grow and your assurance to grow. If you are concerned about your salvation, then you are probably truly saved.
2. If you are struggling with sin in your life, then you are probably a Christian and need to keep fighting the good fight of faith and realize that struggling against sin is a crucial part of the Christian life.

I would also encourage you, as you fight the good fight and struggle against sin, that you do not attempt to do it alone. We need the church. We all need help.



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# "The Holy Trinity God in You the Hope of Glory"

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**Text:**

*February 21, 2016*

**Theme:** "*Christianity*" what it means to be Christian

{ "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit"-  
- Matthew 28:19 ESV }

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The Doctrine of the Trinity teaches that within the unity of the one Godhead there are three separate persons who are coequal in power, nature, and eternity.

-Walter Martin

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## INTRODUCTION

People have pursued "knowing God" from the beginning of time. It is not an easy pursuit. Some have considered God to be – unknowable.

**Isa 55:8-9** For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, says Jehovah. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the

earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

And yet in Gods word, we are invited to know Him and to grow in our knowledge of Him, grow deeper in our personal experience of God. This is a growing process that much like a garden, doesn't appear overnight.

**Joh 17:1-3** ESV When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, (2) since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. (3) And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

While we struggle with knowing God, we tackle a topic today which is even more challenging, that is the Holy Trinity or understanding the TriUne Godhead.

What we believe will govern our ABCs, ABCs being our Attitudes, our Behavior and our Choices. What we believe now, will affect how we handle and survive the trials of life to come. And what we believe will determine how successful Satan will be when his plans to attack, tempt and destroy us are implemented.

In man's attempt to know and understand God, they have written down and attempted to hammer out, as clearly and accurately as they can, their understanding about an area of religion or a person of the Godhead. Many of these attempts exist today as "creeds".

Various Creeds of the past are the Nicean Creed, the Apostles Creed and the Calcedonian Creed. Today I'd like to read from the Athanasian Creed.

## Athanasian Creed (A.D. 500)

This creed is attributed to Athanasius, the fourth century bishop of Alexandria (of Egypt) who was the strongest defender of the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. It defines the doctrines of the Trinity and the nature of Christ in very concise language.

Please note that the term "catholic" with the lower case 'c' a reference to the universal Christian faith since that is how the term was originally used.

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the "catholic" faith. Which faith, except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the "catholic" faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one Eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one Uncreated, and one Incomprehensible. So likewise the

Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Spirit Almighty. And yet they are not three almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord. And yet not three lords, but one Lord.

For as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge each Person by Himself to be both God and Lord, so we are also forbidden by the “catholic” religion to say that there are three gods or three lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.

And in the Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another, but all three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

“God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in 1”.

## **GOD THE FATHER IS GOD.**

**Rom 8:28-30** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be



conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers. (30) But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, those He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God the Father is responsible for ordaining events; calling people to Himself and preplanning events and circumstances of our lives.

### **The Trinity taught from the Beginning**

WE tend to view “God” as Father and Creator of all that exists,

Gen 1:1 ESV In the beginning, **GOD** . . .

This can be viewed as “God” in general or the Father in specific. And yet the Son is referred to in the New Testament, as an active participant in the creation story.

**Heb 1:1-3** God, who at many times and in many ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (2) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, (3) who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the word of His power, through Himself cleansing of our sins, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high,

### **The TRIUNE GOD**

The TriUne God or Trinity is not a NT concept, but is referred to throughout Holy Scripture. Gen.1:26 says, “Let US create man in OUR image...” These plural pronouns are references to the TriUne Godhead.

**Psa 100:3** ESV Know that the LORD, he is God! It is HE who made us, and we are HIS; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

It is interesting that the word “god” is actually a plural form. And yet in this verse, when referring to the term “god” through pronouns, only the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular personal pronoun is used, referring to the LORD Jehovah, (Yahweh) as one or a single, unity. That is also what is brought out in Deut. 6:4, known as the Hebrew Shema.

**Deu 6:4** ESV "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

And if we look carefully at the context of this, we realize that the concept of the TriUne God, is something taught to Moses by God Himself, and commanded to pass on to their children for generations to come.

**Deu 6:1-7** ESV "Now this is the commandment--the statutes and the rules--that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, (2) that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. (3) Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. (4) "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.**" (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

**The Evangelical Free Church of America's** statement of Faith is partially referred to below. Please read and reflect on each of these statements and at least one scripture reference to support them. You may find new words and feelings to express as worship to God.

EFCA – Art.1. WE BELIEVE in one God (Dt. 6:4; Mk. 12:29),

- **He is Creator** of all things (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 11:3), holy (Ex. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 57:15),

**Gen 1:1** ESV In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

- **He is Father of All** – yet not so distant from us; He is actually near, available and involved in our lives and desires to be acknowledged.

**Mat 6:9** ESV Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

- **the Father** (Dt. 32:6; Mt. 6:6; Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 8:6),

**1Co 8:5-6** ESV For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"-- (6) yet for us there is **one God, *THE FATHER***, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

If you would like to view the EFCA statement of faith with its Scripture references log onto [www.christefca.org/faithrefs.html](http://www.christefca.org/faithrefs.html) (Take your cursor and hover over (without clicking) the scripture references, and the verse will appear in a pop up window. )

## **God is Lacking in Nothing**

Our God is Self-Sufficient. He is not dependent upon anyone or anything outside of Himself for His existence. HE is eternally existent. HE is uncreated, and has created all that exists.

- **He is eternally existing** (Ps. 33:11; 102:25-27; 115:3; Dan. 4:34-35; Jn. 5:26; Acts 17:24-25) **in a loving unity** (Jn.3:35; 17:24; 1 Jn. 4:8,16) **of three equally divine Persons** (Jn. 17:11; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2):

(Psa 41:13 ESV) Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

(Psa 90:2 ESV) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

- **He is infinitely perfect** (Dt.32:4; Job 1:7-10; Ps. 18:30; 50:2; 90:2; 145:3; Matt. 5:48). When you pray, what is the image of the ONE to whom you are praying? A figure head? A distant unknowable being or entity? Or do you realize you are talking with your Heavenly Father who loves you, is interested in you and is involved in your life, if we only take time to consider Him.

Learning about and growing in your understanding of the TriUne Godhead or the Trinity, is a life long process for even the oldest and wisest of Christians. It is one of the many topics that may be confusing and difficult to understand, but we are growing in our ability to understand it better. As our understanding grows and deepens, our faith and worship will do the same. Good theology fosters good worship.

## **GOD THE SON IS GOD**

\* We refer to the Son of God as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity.

“God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in 1”.

## God the Son is Fully God

The Son of God has the same character and attributes of deity.

**Heb 1:2-3** (2) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, (3) who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the word of His power..... *through Himself cleansing of our sins, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high,*

- **God the Son is God.** (Matt.3:17; Jn. 1:14; 3:16; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:5), and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:9, 26; Gal. 4:6).
- **God the Son possesses limitless knowledge** (Ps. 139:1-16; 147:5; Isa. 46:10; Jn. 21:17) and ..
- **sovereign power** (Jer. 32:17; Eph. 1:11; Rm. 8:28; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 3:20; Rev. 1:8), God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:11; 3:10,11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8) and to make all things new (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:19-21; Rev.21,22) for His own glory (Ps. 19:1-2; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 13:11; Col. 1:15-23; Rev. 4:11; 5:9-

**EFCA Art. 4. WE BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21; 16:18) is

- **the fullness of God** incarnate or in human flesh.(Jn. 1:14, 18; 1 Jn. 4:2),
- **The man was FULLY God** (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Jn. 1:1; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9)

- God is **FULLY man** (Matt. 4:2; Lk. 2:40, 52; Jn. 11:35; Heb. 5:7-8; 1 Jn. 1:1-3), He is not 50/50 or half and half.

### **God the Son was fully Man**

We must refrain from referring to Jesus as half man and half God or 50 / 50 mix of humanity and deity. God the Son is Fully God and fully man.

- **He was one Person in two natures**(Jn. 3:13; 10:30; 17:5), both divine and human. He was tempted in all ways as we are. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah (Gen. 3:14-20; 12:1-3; 49:8-12; 2 Sam. 7:11b-16; Matt. 1:1, 17; Lk. 4:16-22; 24:25-27; Jn. 1:41; 4:25-26; Acts 2:36; 13:23,32; Rom. 1:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:8,9)—was **conceived** through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:34,35) and **born** of the virgin Mary (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:34,35). He **lived a sinless life** (Rom. 5:19; Gal. 4:4,5; Matt. 3:15; Phil. 2:7,8; Heb. 4:15),
- **He was physically crucified** under Pontius Pilate (Dt. 21:23; Ps. 16:10; Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:16; Jn. 19:16; Acts 2:27, 37), arose bodily from the dead (Matt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-8; Lk.24:39; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:20, 44-45; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5),
- **He physically ascended into heaven** (Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:6-11; Eph. 1:20; 4:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16) and is
- **Presently sits at the right hand of God** the Father (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22) as our High Priest (Heb.2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1). He remains...
- **Consistently an Advocate or mediator** (Rom. 8: 34; 1Tim.2:5-6; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1; Rom.8:34).

As **Fully Man**, Jesus Christ, was fully able, to fully die and fully pay the death-blood penalty for our full redemption.

As **fully God**, He was fully able to be fully tempted, yet he remained fully sinless. As fully God, He was able to fully and eternally forgive sins, and save the human soul from hell, and able to fully provide everlasting life to all who believe fully in Jesus.

*Because of this...*

**God the Son is our only means of salvation.**

**Jn.14:6** – “I am the way....

**Acts.4:12** – “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved...”

**Heb 1:3** (3) [the Son of God] who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the word of His power..... ***through Himself cleansing of our sins, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high,***

So what is Jesus doing now, today? (1) He is Ruling and reigning and is Lord over all creation. (2) Jesus, God the Son is praying for you!

**Rom 8:31-34** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he condemning? It is Christ who has died, but rather also who is raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also **intercedes for us.**

NO other person. Jesus is our only Advocate or Mediator or Intercessor between God and Man. All others are the devil's deception.

“God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in 1”.

In each and in every area of creation, salvation and existence; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are involved together, and working in perfect harmony to accomplish their common goals.

*So the Trinity includes, God the Father, God the Son...*

### **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD**

**EFCA** Art.6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:14).

### **God the Spirit Lives in the believing Christian**

We spent the last few months focusing on this. (see sermon series: “*The Gifts and Fruit of the Holy Spirit: A Match Made in Heave*; or “*The Holy Spirit: The Friend We Need to Get To Know*”)

- **The Holy Spirit convicts** the world of its guilt over sin(Jn. 16:8; 1 Cor. 2:14).
- **He regenerates** or gives new life to sinners (Ezek. 36:25-27; Jn. 3:3, 5; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 1 Thess.1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; Tit. 3:5; Jms. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3) Those who are regenerated are..
- **baptized** (Mk.1:8; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13)
- **into union** with Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:15-21; 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:19; 15:22b; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 1:22; 2:17; 3:28; Eph. 1:4; 2:12;



3:6; 4:32; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1Thess. 4:16)

- **They are also adopted** as heirs (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5; Tit. 3:7) **into the family** of God (Matt. 12:49-50; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:14-18).
- He also **indwells** (Jn. 14:17; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16),
- **illuminates** (1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4-15; Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 1:9-11); **guides** (Jn. 16:13; Acts 15:28; Rom. 8:4, 14; Gal. 5:16, 18); **equips** (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12: 4-10; Eph. 4: 7-11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) and **empowers** (Acts 1:8; 10:38; Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:7)
- **believers for Christ-like living** and service (Acts 6:8; Rom. 8:4-6, 12-16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 3:3, 5; 5:22-23, 25; Eph.2:22; 4:3; Phil. 2:1-2).

This is God, continuously involved in your life, to accomplished the purpose and plan He has for you. And for me.

### **IIIB. The Godhead exists eternally in perfect unity**

\*

“God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in 1”. In each and every area of creation, salvation and existence; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are involved together, and working in perfect harmony to accomplish their intended common goals. Each person of the TriUne Godhead, exists undiminished in their essence. Unchanging in their character, unintrusive in their ministries and unrivaled in their importance.

### **ASSIGNMENT:**

“The Holy Trinity is God In You, The Hope of Glory”.

(1) God the Father draws the unbeliever to Him. (Jn.6:44

(2) God the Holy Spirit convicts a person of their sin and need for salvation (Jn.16:8

(3) God the Son, died on the cross to pay for our sins (Jn.3:16. There was once a woman who left our church and was led astray by a multitude of false internet teachings. She did not believe Jesus should be prayed to. She somehow bought into the false teaching that Jesus was a “lesser god” or a lesser part of the godhead.

(4) The Holy Spirit regenerates us – brining about new life in Christ and seals us (Eph.1:14

(5) God the Father and the Son And the Holy Spirit, secures us in His family (Jn.10:28-29

Can we Worship God the Father for who He is? Can we Praise God the Son for all He has accomplished for us? Can we thank God the Holy Spirit for all He is presently doing and how He is working in our lives?

Don’t be afraid to include the full Trinity in your worship, in your prayers and in every part of your day.

“God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in 1”.

[Ended 7/13/16]



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# "LORD, Teach Us To Pray"

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**Text:** Mat.6

*February 28, 2016*

**Theme:** Prayer

{ "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."  
-- Luke 11:1 ESV }

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"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible  
than to be alive without breathing."

Martin Luther

## INTRODUCTION

In the Christian Life, how we view God, will determine how we view prayer. If we view God as your Holy Father, you will be more likely to address Him with the reverence He deserves.

For those who view God as a divine genie, whose purpose is to grant their every wish, the more their prayers will resemble a glorified Christmas list.

“Lord, teach us to Pray” is an expression of desire – not of obligation but a request. And this, not for personal gain, but for eternal.

If only this were the heart’s desire of every child of God. If only this was the greatest of our petitions. If this were only the first prayer we prayed first, before all other prayers, perhaps our prayer lives would be dramatically changed.

For the true, believing Christian....

Prayer is our life source. Prayer is our power source. Prayer is our hope source. Prayer is Conversation with God. Prayer is effective and crucial toward accomplishing the purposes and will of God. In prayer we address god and He changes us. Prayer is not always about asking, but also about communing with God. It is not so much about receiving, as it is about *becoming*.

God uses prayer to accomplish His good will. Prayer evidences our own heart’s desire. Prayer is not an oratorical practice. Prayer is not merely a recitation or repetition of certain words or phrases

**Luk 11:1-4** And it happened as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, **LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY**, as John also taught His disciples. (2) And He said to them, When you pray, say: Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in Heaven, so also on the earth. (3) Give us day by day our daily bread, (4) and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Today I ask you to join me in making this our prayer and the first thing we pray, as we begin to pray...

**“OH, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!”**

**WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE OUGHT**

\* Therefore we need the LORD to teach us to pray!

We don't know how to pray, as we ought<sup>[Rom.8:26]</sup>, so the book of Romans tells us that the Holy Spirit prays *for* us.

**Rom 8:26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

God helps us to pray. He is always available to help us pray.

*The Truth is...*

**We are ignorant and powerless**

\* The greatest danger in prayer is not in failing to get what we ask for. But the greatest danger in prayer is failing to align our hearts and wills with that of the Father and as a result praying amiss or presumptuously. “This is what I want, therefore, this is what God wants me to have.”

***This is praying presumptuously.***

“I prayed in ‘Jesus name’ so I can have full confidence that I will receive what I have asked for.”

***This is praying presumptuously.***

We are ignorant and we are powerless. And unless we align our hearts with that of God's heart; unless our prayers are in accordance with His good and perfect will; and unless our greatest desire is for His plan to be accomplished in our circumstances, ***then we are praying presumptuously.***

**Before Great feats**, Elijah prayed and received power and strength for the task to which God had called him.

[prayer>>] “O LORD, answer me,...

[motivation for prayer>>] ...that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God...” (1Ki.18:37) And fire fell from heaven.

**Before a great battle, Jehoshaphat** was faced with 3 combined armies coming to attack and annihilate Judah. He Prayer, “Oh Lord We have no power, neither do we know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” (2Chron.20:12) (He confessed ignorance and powerlessness). And God set an ambush and destroyed all His enemies that day.

How many leaders pray like that? “I am powerless and I am ignorant.” This won’t sell books or strategies or philosophies. We want answers. This kind of praying probably won’t boost your TV or radio ratings. People want great displays of “power” with great promises and conclusive answers.

**IN the face of great fear**, Peter prayed and God performed a miracle in his life. Peter began to walk on the water, but took his eyes off the Lord and because of the storm raging around him, began to doubt and sink. The he cried out in prayer to Jesus, “Lord Save Me!”(Mat.14:30). Short. Sweet. Effective.

### **The Disciples were powerless and prayerless**

Someone brought their son to the disciples to cast out an unclean spirit which had been tormenting their son, and their entire family. But the disciples could offer no help. So they came to Jesus who spoke to the spirit, commanded it to leave and the boy was like a dead person. Then Jesus touched the boy and he “arose”.

READ Mark 9:20-29

**Mar 9:28-29** And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" (29) And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer [*and fasting*]."

If anyone on the planet should have known how to pray, it should have been the disciples. This is just prior to the Luke chapter 11 passage, where the disciples ask Jesus *to teach them to pray*. They needed to learn this lesson of personal powerlessness.

Sometimes or often times, we pray, because we may think it is what Christians are supposed to do at times like this; at the dinner table, at bedtime, before a bible study; or in some great meeting. Sometimes we pray, because it is what we are accustomed to doing or expected to do. Sometimes we are not aware of our own powerlessness and desperate need for God to really intervene and do something.

With the boy with an unclean spirit and the disciple's inability to cast it out, Jesus revealed to them their own presumptuousness and their own powerlessness. After Mark 9, the disciples ask Jesus to ***Teach Us To Pray***, in Lk.11. Prayer is what was requested and prayer is what was needed.

They did not need new techniques or a different curriculum. They did not need to seek the latest guru on the topic or to find better "program". They needed **PRAYER!**

Prayer is not just talking *to* God, but conversing *with* God. Prayer is Communion with God, including fellowship and relationship with God.

Prayer is humbling ourselves before God in His holy presence. It is resigning ourselves to the fact that unless God does something, nothing of any value will get done.

Prayer is submitting our will to the Father's greater will.

Hebrews 4:16 indicates that prayer is actually entering into the Holy of Holies of God's presence, yet with no fear of being stricken dead and incinerated by His holiness. They needed prayer and they needed to learn how to pray.

## "OH, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!"

*We need an example of effective prayer.*

### **JESUS IN PRAYER AS OUR EXAMPLE**

How is your own personal prayer life? Is it monotonous? Boring? Brief? We need an effective example for our own prayer life, so we may effectively be taught how we ought to pray.

#### **Jesus in Prayer**

After their last Passover and before His arrest, Jesus and His disciples were in the Garden of Gethsemane together in prayer.

i. Jesus has ***prayed*** for you.

I have found this to be an immensely encouragement realization.

**Joh 17:17-21** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (18) As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. (19) And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (20) "I do not ask for these only, but also ***for those who will believe in me through their word,*** (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that



they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

This is trickle down prayer. Jesus has prayed for His disciples and their message of the gospel has gone out and around the world. And over 2000 years, that message has come to us and we have believed and have been saved. And now, part of “those” for whom Jesus prayed for in Gethsemane, are you and me.

ii. Jesus ***Is praying*** for you

This is present day – real time.

**Rom 8:34** Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Jesus not only prayed for you 2000 years ago, He is exalted at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning over all creation AND He is praying for us today.

iii. The Holy Spirit is ***praying*** for you.

The Holy Spirit of God is also helping us pray.

**Rom 8:26-28** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (27) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God

**"OH, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!"**

**Jesus in Gethsemane (Mat.26:36:**

Here we see Jesus as an example, struggling in prayer. Prior to praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told Peter of his coming denial. Which Peter responded: “Even if I die, I will not deny you.” Peter was presumptuous and powerless. So Jesus took them to the garden to pray with him.

“Fellows come to the garden with me and pray”. And they did. “Sure Jesus, we’ll go pray with you. We’ll pray all night if you want us to.”

Jesus takes 3 others and goes deeper into the garden to pray and after praying, the disciples fell asleep. But in that he tells his disciples; "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." (Mat 26:38)

### ***Jesus and the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane:***

- 1) The he disciples lacked a prayer burden. They were there to carry out the task, but not to wrestle in prayer. They did not deny their own desires in order to seek God’s.
- 2) They lacked desperation or fervency. They were unaware of the severity of events just ahead. *“Even if I died, I will not deny you”*. Therefore, they had no passion, or fervency or desperation in prayer.
- 3) They lacked Christ’s heart in prayer. Then as Jesus prayed to His Father, He prayed; "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." (Mat 26:42) Jesus’ prayer was passionate, heavily burdened and aligned with the heart of the heavenly Father.

### ***Jesus as our Example:***

- 1) He prayed honestly – “I would prefer not to have to experience this.” Yet, he is surrendered to the Father.

2) He prayed desperately – “My soul is sorrowful unto death”. He was faced with Calvary, death, taking on the sin burden of the world and paying for the sins of humanity, though He Himself, was *sinless*. His prayer was one of desperation.

3) He prayed submissively – “Your will be done”. (Mat.26:42) It was not about Jesus, but about the Father and what His will was.

**Question:** Is praying, “Thy will be done”, lacking in faith? No!! But it is lacking in selfishness!

### **"OH, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!"**

But look at this and we must not miss this. One thing Christ’s prayer is lacking is selfishness!

This is narrative. It is historical. This is not given as a promise. But it is a window into perhaps, our own spiritual battles as we are engaged in desperate prayer. Luke shares this, as Matthew did not include this in his observations.

**Luk 22:43** And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

Typically, we cannot see the spirit world around us. But as Elisha was surrounded by the armies of the King of Aram, He prayed, and God worked a miracle.

**2Ki 6:16-17** He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (17) Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

God had His ministering angels all around His servants. Hebrews 1:7, says the *angels are servants of fire*.

**Heb 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

I can't help but think that when we pray, heavy-heartedly, or fervently, or passionately with a particular prayer burden or even with a sense of desperation - that God sends to us, angels to strengthen us and sustain us. When we are deeply burdened , praying can be exhausting. Prayer exercises every aspect of our being; the body, emotions, the mind and the spirit. And it is exhausting, but "burdened" prayer can also become the means of receiving the renewed strength we need from God Himself.

**Isa 40:28-31** ESV Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (29) He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. (30) Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; (31) but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

If we need our strength renewed, perhaps the answer is to expend ourselves in prayer and experience the Lord's restoration.

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Today I ask you to join me in making this our prayer and the first thing we pray, before we begin to pray...

**OH, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!**

**Lord Teach me:**

*Lord, teach me to listen – listen to your voice and your impression upon my heart. I want to listen to the voice of Your Spirit as I read your holy Word and seek Your holy face.*

*Lord, teach me to sense your heart in the matter I am praying for. Teach me to admit that my own lusts often get in the way of pure prayer.*

*Lord, teach me to submit to your will, and to share your prayer burden. Teach me to feel your heart's concern for the things that YOU desire. Teach me to desire YOU most and seek You First in all things.*

*Teach me to be sensitive to the leading of your Holy Spirit for my choices and direction. Teach me to be quiet and to filter out the noise of all that distracts me from being led by You.*

*Teach me to see and feel the needs of other and for my heart to be broken if necessary. Teach me even, to be directed by and devoted to your plan and purpose for my life, whatever it may be.*

*Lord, teach me to Pray at all times.*

**Luk 21:36** But stay awake **at all times**, **praying** that you may have strength to escape **all** these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**Eph 6:18** **praying at all times** in the Spirit, with **all** prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with **all** perseverance, making supplication for **all** the saints,

**1Th 5:17** pray without ceasing,

*Pray in the Spirit.*

In prayer, be led by the Spirit. Lists are good as guides and reminders. But practicing praying as we are led by the Holy Spirit, beyond the physical and medical and earthly, to spiritual, kingdom issues of the heart of God, is an important practice of learning to pray.

Evaluate your prayer lists and prayer practices. How much is physical oriented and how much is really spiritual, eternal, kingdom oriented praying?

Once we honestly do that, we may find our prayer lists and prayer life changing dramatically.

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*Note: Christ's warning and promise to his disciples in prayer.*

**Luk 21:36** ESV But stay awake at all times, praying that you may *have strength* to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

*Christ's example and God's provision for expending ourselves in self-depleting, exhausting prayer.*

**Luk 22:42-43** ESV saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, *strengthening* him.



# "If All Else Fails, *Read the Instructions*"

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*The Christian Life and Holy Scripture!*

*April 3, 2016*

**Text:** Tim.2:15; 2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20; Acts 17:11; Ps.119

**Theme:** Balancing the Christian Life involves a Lifetime process of Learning.

"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."

-- Acts17:11 ESV

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This planet came with a set of instructions, but we seem to have misplaced them. Civilization needs a new operating system.

--Paul Hawken

## **INTRODUCTION**

Holy Scripture is the written expression, of God's Holy Character, His Inerrant Truth and His Perfect Will. Most of us are familiar with the value of owner's manuals or instruction manuals for an

item or appliance we have purchased – even an automobile. All are intended to offer the operators valuable instruction on operation and maintenance of the item or appliance that it was designed for.

This past Thursday, I was in a tire store, and I asked everyone in the waiting room this question. “I am doing some research on ‘How Did We Get the Bible?’, and ‘What do you believe about it’s content?’”. There were 4 of us there, not counting the workers, and this was the basic input I received from those people regarding the Bible.

One woman even stated: “The Bible is like our owner’s manual, and It tells us how we should live and treat others, and what we know about God.” Today’s message is entitled: **“If all Else Fails, Read the Instructions”**.

*As we consider our topic this morning, think about “learning the Bible” as a life-long process of...*

### **STRIVING FOR TRUTH: THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

As we learn the Bible, we are looking for Spiritual Instruction.

**2Tim. 2:15** ESV <sup>1</sup>Do your best <sup>2</sup>to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, <sup>3</sup>rightly handling the word of truth.

Striving toward Truth involves getting to know our “owner’s manual”, the Bible. In 2 Timothy, Paul instructs young Timothy, who is a leader in the early church.

*And Paul Reveals that..*

**WE are responsible for what we know.**

Searching for Truth involves Personal Effort. <sup>1</sup>Do your best]



refers to personal effort. Willful, purposeful, effort put forth in order to excel at something. This means doing what is in my power to do so, in order to properly understand the Bible and to accurately pass it on to others. There is a lot at stake.

We know that an athlete has to do his best to be a good athlete. We know that being a good carpenter means doing your best to learn the trade and hone your skills. But when it comes to the Bible, some think God will just pour it into a hole in our heads. Yet, Scripture tells us that we are responsible for what we know and we must do our best to know the Bible well. Letting the “spirit lead” is no excuse for lack of Bible study.

*Paul also informs us that...*

**We are accountable for what we learn.**

Searching for Truth involves personal responsibility.

[<sup>2</sup>to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed] refers to being honoring and pleasing to God or being ashamed before God because we did a lousy job at how we handle His Holy Word.

But isn't God pleased with us no matter what? Doesn't God accept us just as we are? When you come to Christ in your sinfulness, there is nothing you can possibly do to clean yourself up, or to minimize your sin enough to be worthy of salvation and entering into the family of God.

HOWEVER, once in His family we can please or disappoint God. We can grieve the Holy Spirit of God<sup>[Eph.4:30]</sup> by our sinfulness or our lack of obedience. Never think that it doesn't matter how you live as a Christian, just because God has already accepted you. That is a lie from the devil and perhaps part of the reason some Christians feel comfortable with the sin they are living in.

Christian: Do not be deceived. God will discipline His children, and that is never pleasant.<sup>[Heb.12:11]</sup>

[<sup>3</sup>rightly handling the word of truth] this refers to, the fact that we can make a mess of things or we can bungle and misinterpret and misrepresent the Scriptures if we are not careful. Prayer is no substitute for Bible Study. It is important part of it, but no substitute for it. Being led by the Holy Spirit, is no substitute for Good Bible Study. The Holy Spirit is ultimately our teacher<sup>[Jn.14:26]</sup>, but that does not relieve us of our responsibility of studying well.

So we must strive or work towards truth and thirst for righteousness as we seek to pass it on to others.

*Study and Maturity will take us toward...*

## **THE PURPOSE OF TRUTH & MATURING IN THE FAITH**

We need conviction about what we believe. Conviction must surely result in action. Suppose you see a school bus heading toward French Creek and the bridge is out. What would you do? "Oh, it doesn't really matter, its in the Lord's hands." ---*I don't think so.*

**2Tim. 3:16-17** ESV All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Here we are given the value in God's Word of Truth.

- 1) It is God breathed – "All Scripture is breathed out by God" - this is Inspiration.
- 2) it is Profitable for spiritual life – "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness," - that is

Christian growth and maturity.

3) It is Life altering. - “that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. It will beneficially affect our service for Jesus Christ. The Truth of God’s word should move us to obedient action.

*When we are teaching Truth...*

**We are affecting the eternity of others.**

Suppose your brakes or steering goes out on your car. It could be catastrophic and you would be heading for disaster. What we pass on to others can determine their eternal destiny, and if we are wrong, we could send them heading for spiritual disaster.

<p><b>James 3:1</b> ESV Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.</p>
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Some think that because they don’t hold a “position” as a teacher, they don’t have to worry about being a good Bible student. That is a short-sighted way of looking at our Christian life.

We are here to make a difference. And we are to study in order to pass on to others, the Truth we have learned. Remember, we are accountable for what we learn and responsible for what we pass on to others.

**Truth also affects our daily operations**

Will we please God? Are we honoring Him? Are we seeking His will and plan for life today? I had the opportunity to pass on God’s Truth to others at Flynn’s waiting room. You may have opportunity to pass on some Truth at your office area, or with your Grand-kids or those you meet at the store. You need to study in

order to prepare for the upcoming opportunities to give spiritual direction to others.

This should not be a burden for you, but a privilege. It is a thrilling experience to be able to have a kingdom conversation with someone whom you had opportunity to give a little spiritual nurturing.

**Act 17:10-11** ESV The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. (11) Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

<sup>1</sup>They were thirsty for Truth.

<sup>2</sup>They were disciplined in their studying. A wrong turn today can affect where we wind up in 30 yrs. Not just in eternity but regarding to God's calling for you and your life.

## **GOD'S WORD; PROTECTED THROUGH THE AGES**

**Literary Evidence:** Do you realize there is more scientific evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ than there is for William Shakespeare? You don't hear of people taking Shakespeare out of the schools. You don't hear of libraries being burned down because they contain poems and plays by Shakespeare. You don't hear of people being decapitated because they were caught at one of his plays or in possession of one of his books.

But when it comes to Jesus Christ, people are persecuted, tortured, hated and rejected because of Him. And people don't seem to doubt the existence of Shakespeare, but they certainly attempt to deny Jesus.

## **How We Did *NOT* get the Bible**

This involves eternal destiny.

**i.) The writers did not Trust 2<sup>nd</sup> hand information**

**2Pe 1:16-19** ESV For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses** of his majesty. (17) For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," (18) we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. (19) And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

**ii.) They were eyewitnesses with First hand info**

**Joh 1:14** ESV And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**1Jn 1:1-3** ESV That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- (2) the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- (3) that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

They were eyewitnesses to the message they proclaimed. They had first hand information.

**Luk 1:1-4** ESV Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, (2) just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, (3) it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, (4) that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

The book of Luke (the life of Jesus), was part of the book of Acts (the life of the early church). These were the people who heard Christ teach; who saw his miracles; who believed in Him; who saw Lazarus raised from the dead; who were at Calvary and watched Jesus being crucified; they watched as He was buried in the tomb; they saw him and lived with him 40 days after his resurrection; they visually watched His resurrected body ascend into heaven before their very eyes. They were there. They were eyewitnesses and documented it for us today.

### **So How DID we Get the Bible?**

We just learned that it was given by God Himself.

**2Pet. 1:19-21** ESV And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, (20) knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. (21) For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

### **HOW Did We Get the Bible? – ILLUstration ( Handout)**

That was the question I asked 3 other people in the waiting room at Flynns this week as I was getting my tires balanced.

Answers to the question which are often given:

- 1) As a book, the Bible fell to earth from the sky.
- 2) the Bible was given by angels, originally inscribed on golden plates.
- 3) A Group of people got together 800-1000 yrs ago and wrote the Bible.
- 4) The Bible has been copied so many times, and through that process been changed, so that we can't know if what we have today is really what God originally communicated.
- 5) I don't know.

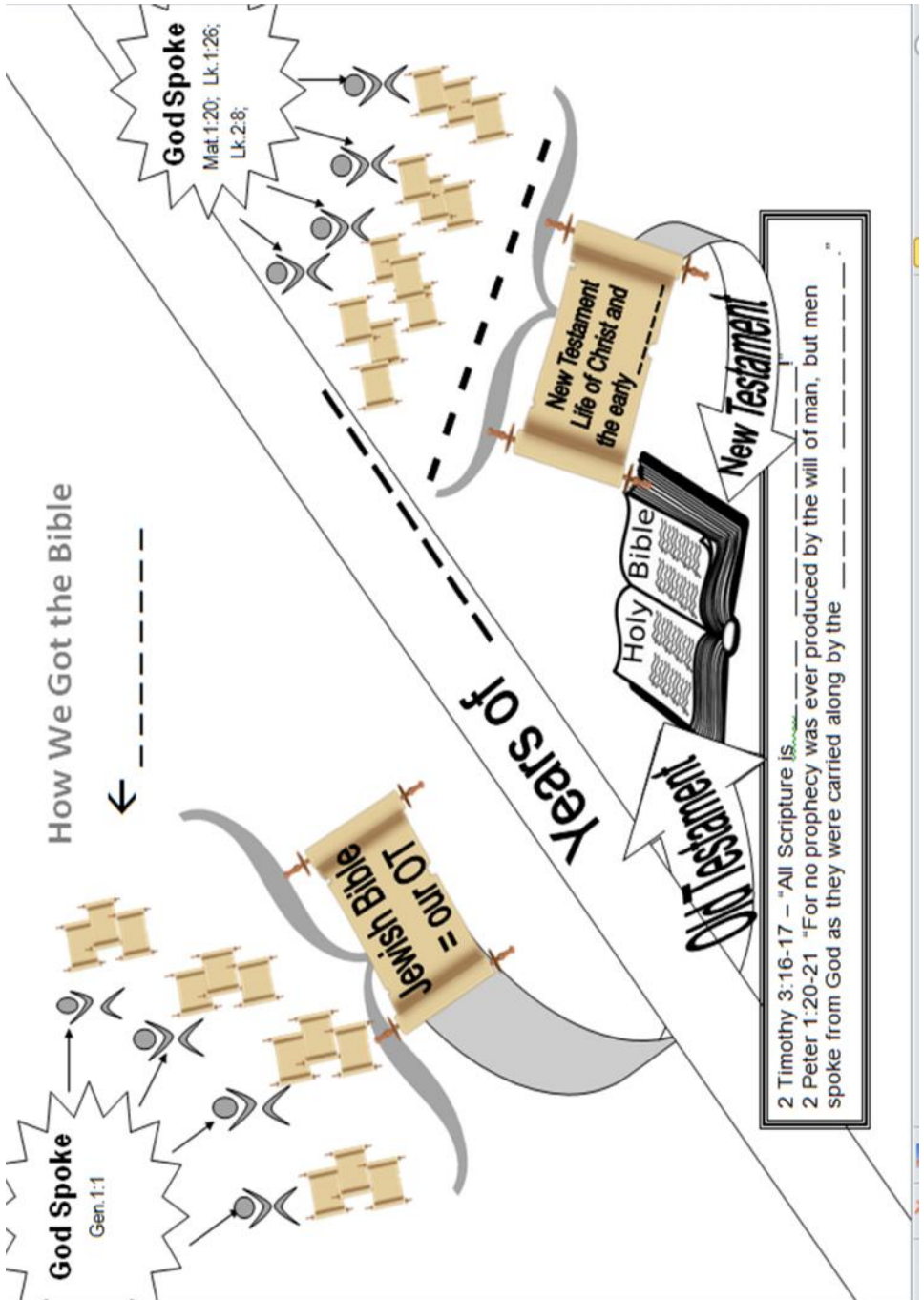
As a result of our discussion one woman broke down in tears, asking "How can a loving God allow a newborn child to die?" A second person, later asked, "How can a parent who has lost a child, go through that without a faith in God to sustain them?"

What we believe about the contents of the Bible and what we believe about how we got the Bible is important. There's a lot riding on that. Bottom line is: We have to trust Gods' word the Bible, as though our very lives and faith depend on it, because they do. So doesn't it make sense to be sure, not only of its content but of its origin as well.

This chart [next page] describes a very simplistic way of how we got the Bible. Begin at "God Spoke" in the upper left hand corner and work your way to the "God Spoke" in the upper right hand side.

If we understand HOW We Got the Bible, we will be more inclined to believe in the content of the Bible.







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# "Do You Love Me?"

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*The Christian Life and Holy Scripture!*

*April 3, 2016*

**Text:** Tim.2:15; 2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20; Acts 17:11; Ps.119

**Theme:** Loving God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ

Rom.12:1-2; Acts 10:36; Phil.2:11

Obedience – If you love me.. obey

|  
"If you love me, you will keep my commandments"  
-- John 14:15 ESV

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"You can't blame gravity for falling in love.

\_\_\_\_\_  
–A. Einstein

## INTRODUCTION

If any of us were willing to face the truth, we'd acknowledge that there were times growing up, when we were pretty good children – doing what Mom and Dad asked, and did what we could for the overall good of the family. But we'd also have to acknowledge

that there were times when you went about doing what you wanted to do, getting away with things you ought not been doing and sometimes suffering the penalty of pulling some pretty stupid and disrespectful stunts. Simply put, we were often disobedient kids!

Today our lesson is entitled: "Do You Love Me?" and is focused on Loving God and the **LORDSHIP** of Jesus Christ. This series is about an entire lifetime of learning and Christian growth.

**Act 10:34-36** ESV So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, (35) but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. (36) As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is **LORD OF ALL**),

What does it mean to declare, "*Jesus is Lord of all*"? "**LORDSHIP**" refers to nothing less than, and nothing short of the absolute and sole, ruler and master, over another person's life and property.

And The **LORDSHIP** of Jesus Christ can only come from a proper understanding, from God's Holy Word the Bible, regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ, with a certain conviction regarding that which Jesus deserves from us. The Lordship of Christ also comes with a willful and purposeful, invitation and submission, to His absolute desire and Sole reign; in controlling us and all we posses. 'Other than that, the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not really that big of a deal.'

Today's message is entitled: "**Do You Love Me?:** Focusing on *Loving God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ*". The Bottom Line is that, this is about consistent obedience to God's word as we follow and honor Christ with our lives.

*The Lordship of Jesus Christ involves is a life of...*

## **CHRISTIAN LOVE AND TOTAL SUBMISSION**

We may not have a problem with Christian love, but we may view the concept of total submission to Christ as somewhat intrusive and irksome. The **LORDSHIP** of Jesus Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit, while being two separate concepts, are very similar in their manifestation.

**THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** involves a willful submission to the controlling influence of God's indwelling Holy Spirit.

In referring to the Filling of the Holy Spirit, John MacArthur states this: "The idea is one of keeping yourself constantly filled, as you yield moment by moment to the leading of the Spirit. It fits perfectly with the process of walking by the Spirit." [GTU.org]

**THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST** involves a similar submission to the person and work of God the Son, in leading us in accordance with His Holy Word and in obedience in reaching others for Christ.

In referring to the **LORDSHIP** of Jesus Christ, Bill Bright of Camus Crusade for Christ, offers the "Throne" illustration.

*The Christian life opposes...*

### **The SELF-Enthroned Life**

There is a throne in each person's life and whoever is seated or enthroned on that throne is ruler and "lord" of that life. In the Self-enthroned life, Jesus Christ is de-throned. Self is on the throne of one's own life, while



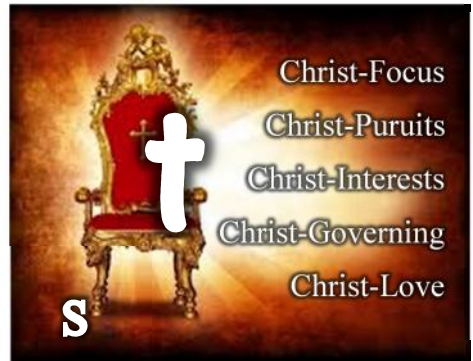
Christ, if he is in the picture at all, is off the throne and certainly not in a position to influence the one seated on the throne.

The Self-Enthroned life is completely self-focused. IT is focused on its own self-interests and self-pursuits. Because it focuses on its own self-interests and pursuits, it is self-governing – in that it seeks its own way, it makes its own choices, chooses its own path, and governs its own affairs. This person is one who makes their own decisions and calls their own shots, and they are governed and motivated by self-love. That is the Self-enthroned life.

*Then in contrast to the Self-Enthroned life there is ...*

### **The *CHRIST*-Enthroned Life**

In the Christ-Enthroned Life, Self is de-throned and Christ is rightfully exalted on the throne of this person's life, where Christ is indeed, Lord of All.



The Christ-Enthroned life is completely Christ focused. This means it is focused on pursuing Christ's interests, because it is Christ governed. And it is Christ-governed because it is motivated by Christ love.

**2Cor. 5:14-15** For the love of Christ compels us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

v.14) “the love of Christ compels us...” refers to a heart of love for Christ and a desire for our lives to please Him. It must express

itself in a Christ enthroned life or a heart of total submission to the Holy reign of Jesus as Master and Lord over all the areas and categories of our lives. That means, Christ rules supremely in every area of life.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ begins as an attitude of the heart. From an attitude of the heart, the will is then motivated and chooses to put Christ first and placing Him on the throne of our life.

**“Do You Love Me?”** Loving God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ” this means Christ will be enthroned in our life as “Lord of all” and Supreme Leader.

*The Lordship of Jesus Christ also involves ...*

### **CHRIST ALLEGIANCE AND LIFE DEVOTION**

Allegiance refers to those with whom we are allied, or the cause and purpose with which we are aligned. For the Christian, that must be or become the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**Joh 14:15** ESV "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

This is a Cause and Affect statement. If... *THEN*.... “If you love me, [THEN], you will keep my commandments.”

### **Love for God**

The Motivation of the Lordship of Christ and obedience to His word is genuine love for God. Jesus was asked what the greatest command was.

**Mat 22:37-40** ESV And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment.

The greatest commandment is to love God above all else. That is the first and greatest commandment. And yet that commandment does not stand alone, as there is a Second commandment which is likened to the first.

**Mat 22:39-40** ESV (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

In his book, "the Holiest Of All", Andrew Murray writes this: "Paul said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." [Phil.3:8]. Let us do so, too. In the Christian life the chief thing, the one thing needful, is the knowledge of Christ. Not the intellectual apprehension of the truth, but the living experiential heart knowledge that comes from faith and fellowship with Him, [motivated] from love and obedience. May it be ours!

This is from the heart – both emotion and expression; It is of the human will – yet expressed through our purpose and choice."

*The Lordship of Christ must also include....*

### **Love for Others**

If we love Jesus, we must love others. If we love others, that love must somehow be translated into loving acts toward them. Our commitment to Jesus Christ will be reflected in how we view and treat others.

i.) love our neighbors –Mat.27:39

We just looked at this in...

**Mat 22:39** ESV (39) ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. "

Our neighbor may be one who is "lost" or without Christ and still outside of God's family. Our neighbor is not simply the person who lives next door to you.

ii.) love the lost (Lk.15:4-7)

*Jesus told this parable about lost sheep...*

**Luk 15:4-7** ESV Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. (2) And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." (3) So he told them this parable: (4) "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? (5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (6) And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' (7) Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

If we truly love God, should we not truly love the Lost as well? And if we truly love the Lost, we will not be capable of keeping silent when it comes to possibly sharing the Love of God and grace of Jesus with them. There is nothing more important than reaching the Lost.

**1Pet 3:15-17** ESV But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, (15) but in your hearts honor **Christ the Lord** as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a

reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect

To say we love the lost but do not take opportunity to help them prepare for eternity, what kind of love is that? About 6 months ago I was in a meeting with a group of local pastors, and they were discussing various ideas about community projects and how we might help the people in our area.

After one man shared extensively on a community helps initiative, I asked, "where is the spiritual help in all this?" One pastor answered, "we will be helping the poor and feeding the hungry. That is our top priority as the body of Christ."

I responded: "it sounds like we are merely helping them go to hell on full stomachs. Why not help them go to *heaven* on full stomachs.?" Jesus Himself, stated that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. There is nothing more important than loving God and reaching the lost with the love of God and the message of the gospel of Christ.

*The Lordship of Christ must demonstrate ...*

## **LOVING GOD AND CONNECTING WITH OTHERS.**

One of the most telling passages I have found connecting our love for Christ with life action is in John 21.

**Joh 21:15-17** ESV When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, **do you love me** more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." (16) He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, **do you love me**?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." (17) He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, **do you love**



**me**?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

*In this passage Jesus asked...*

### **Do you love me?**

Why did Jesus ask this question 3 times? "*Do You love Me?*" We know that Peter denied Jesus 3 times. This is often viewed as Jesus **Restoring Peter's Confidence in Christ's love**. Peter had denied Jesus 3 times; Jesus asks Peter 3 times, "do you love me?"

Three times Jesus asked Peter, "Do You Love Me?" and Each time Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, I love You." And each time, Jesus responded with this command.

*Jesus commanded...*

### **Then Feed my sheep!**

"If – ***THEN***". ***IF*** you love me, ***THEN*** you will feed my sheep"! For Jesus, genuine Love for Him, is directly related to what we do For Him; how we obey Him; how we represent him; and how we align ourselves with His passion and purpose.

But this passage is not only Jesus Restoring Peter's Confidence in Christ's love, but it is also **Confirming Peter's Calling in Christ's service**. When Peter denied Jesus, He denied knowing Jesus – stating adamantly, "I don't know the man."

Jesus charges Peter 3 times to express to others, just as adamantly that He **DOES** know Christ and to nurture the faith of his other followers. "Feed My Sheep." Be a courageous and dependable shepherd to the flock of God. As we know, Peter eventually did just that. He became such a courageous shepherd of God's people that in 1 Peter, it is the same Peter who denied Christ, but was

restored by Christ; who accepted the charge to shepherd the flock of Christ's Sheep and who spoke these words to the church.

**1Pet. 5:1-2** ESV So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2) **shepherd the flock of God** that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

This was Peter, the restored disciple speaking and encouraging other church leaders to “shepherd the flock of God” and to “feed His sheep”.

*And who was Peter now speaking to?*

**1Pet. 1:1** ESV Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

It appears that Peter is addressing persecuted believers, fearful and scattered as he once was, and encouraging the leaders who are scattered along with the scattered church, to courageously shepherd, care for, feed, and defend the sheep. And not only is Christ's charge to Peter only, but to all believers who declare that **“JESUS IS LORD OF ALL!”**

If we truly love Christ, we must be compelled by that love, to care for the other sheep, some who may still be outside the family of God. “But isn't this for the leaders?” If you are a growing Christian, and if you have been a Christian for 10 yrs, then you are out of excuses and you should be a leader, at some level. You should be encouraging others, at some level. You should be teaching and passing on God's truth to others, at some level.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is not a one time event. AS a person grows in their faith, their understanding of Christ grows and their willingness to de-throne Self and Enthroned Christ as He deserves also grows.

We are to Take up cross daily and follow Christ –

**Luk 9:23** ESV And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

This is a daily submission and a daily dying to myself. It must be a daily de-throning of Self and a daily, willful enthroning of Christ as Lord over all of my life.

### **ASSIGNMENT:**

**(1)** Is Jesus Christ Lord over all of your life? Out of love, submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

IS there any area of your life, no matter how small – that Jesus Christ does not rule over as “Lord of All”?

\* finances? \* your entertainment – that which you like to watch, read or listen to? \* places you like to go and people you like to do things with? Is Jesus “Lord of All” in these areas?

\* Relationships of interest and romance? - I can’t help but think that if Jesus were truly Lord over all our relationships, that many of our relationships would look and feel much different. The interests of others would surely become of greater concern than our own interests.

\* our personal daily pursuits? \* Goals of my life? \* dreams I am chasing? All these must be submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

(2) Pray about this. I believe this is such an important part of the Christian life, and yet it seems to be so frequently neglected and over looked. Some believe that they have trusted in Jesus and think they are going to heaven and that is all that matters.

But Jesus is worth so much more. He is worthy of nothing less, than everything and nothing short of first place in every area of our Christian life. Jesus deserves to be “Lord of all”.

**Phil 2:9-13** ESV Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus **Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. (12) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Get: **Balancing the Christian Life, pt2**

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# ***Don't close this booklet yet***

*without considering this all important question.*

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## **Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;  
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come  
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only  
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should  
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him  
to die in our place.

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

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of  
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were  
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his  
name, he gave the right to become children of God, -  
John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you  
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins  
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

## The ABCs

**A** - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

**B** - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

**C** - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

**Prayer**: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

**Connect** with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

**Commit** yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Act 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:  
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Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org)

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*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...  
your highest calling,  
your greatest purpose,  
your soul's source and joy,  
and your all-consuming passion.*



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*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.*

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