

Reflections

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. (2 Cor 3:18)

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Jan 1

What is Christianity?

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

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

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

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

Jan 2

I Am the Life

In him was life. (John 1:4)

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

Many professing Christians limit salvation to what amounts to a new legal classification. The doctrine of justification by faith rightly states that because Christ died for us, that if we put our faith in Him, then not only are all of our sins imputed to Him, but all of His righteousness is imputed to us. This is legally correct. But there is more. If we place our faith in Christ, yes, God legally imputes to us His righteousness. But more than this, God imparts to us Christ Himself – Christ in us is why we are alive -- He IS our life. Likewise, because Christ is righteous, He is our righteousness. In short, Christ in us is ALL to us.

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

Jan 3

All in Christ

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

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

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

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

Jan 4

Crucified WITH Christ

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

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

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

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

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

Jan 5

How Christ Dwells in Us

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

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

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

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

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

Jan 6

Redemption

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

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

Do not confuse the words, “redemption,” or, “restoration,” with the word, “repair.” Jesus did not come to repair, cure, or fix the old creation. He did not bring the Adam race back to life AS the Adam race. Rather, Jesus came to put a final end to the Adam race and the old creation, and thus, usher in a NEW creation.

If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a NEW creation. Old things are passed away....all things have become NEW. (II Cor. 5:17)

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

Jan 7

Light Is Come

Any gospel that does not tell the Truth about the lost condition of man, and his need to be saved from it, is a false gospel. Any gospel that denies the sin nature denies the need for the Cross. John wrote, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us." (I John 1:8) The Truth will expose our lost condition.

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

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

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

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

Jan 8

It is Finished

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

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

What this tells us is that overcoming is not a matter of doing the right thing, or of finding the right answer. No. Overcoming is a matter of faith in the right Person.

There are practical outworkings of a stand by faith: I must lose my life to Jesus Christ to find true life. In doing so, I am losing the life that was finished at the Cross -- but finding the life that began at the resurrection. Never think that victory is possible while holding onto our own lives. No. That is actually a guarantee for defeat. Victorious life is His life, and He is my life only if I first relinquish myself to Him.

Jan 9

Repent and Believe

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

Ask: Repent of what? Repent of primarily of the sin of unbelief – of the sin of not believing. Since Jesus already died for all of my sin, then the one sin that can keep me from Him is the sin of refusing to come to Him. Thus, the one sin we must repent of in order to come to Jesus is this same sin of neglecting to come to Jesus. This is the sin of unbelief. And if we do repent of unbelief, then we will – BELIEVE.

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

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

Jan 10

Made Unto Us Sanctification

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

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

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

Paul said, “But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is **made unto us** wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” (1 Cor 1:29-31) What is sanctification? Sanctification is NOT us being made to look like Christ. Rather, sanctification is Christ – being seen in and through a saint. The Treasure in an earthen vessel never makes the earthen vessel to be a treasure. No. The Treasure remains the Treasure and the earthen vessel remains the earthen vessel. But the earthen vessel is privileged to be broken so that the Treasure might be seen: “He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

Jan 11

Forming of Christ Within

Paul said, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal 4:19) The word translated, “formed,” means, “to inwardly realize or express.” In short, Paul desired for saints to inwardly realize and express the Christ who dwells in them.

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

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

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

Jan 12

Freedom from Self

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

Christianity is not self-knowledge. It is Christ-knowledge. Neither is Christianity a matter of God making us to look LIKE Jesus – so that we can take pride in ourselves, or finally be at ease with ourselves. No. Christianity is Christ IN US, manifesting Himself through us. In a word, it is exactly what Paul said, “Yet NOT I, but CHRIST.” (Gal. 2:20) But what I am describing is utterly contrary to our natural make-up. We barely even have a frame of reference for this Truth. Yet all of it is accomplished, not by fixing what what ails us so that we look like Jesus. It is accomplished if we DIE, and if we are raised – then then come to realize HIM. Once we begin to know the Truth, we will be set free from our continual fussing with ourselves. We can walk with HIM.

Jan 13

All the Fullness of God

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

The epistle to the Colossians is about Christ as the fullness of God for the saint. Read the first two chapters. Again and again we read, "In Him; through Him; by Him, etc." Indeed, in chapter 2 we are warned against believing that there is anything, or anyone, that God has given in addition to His Son. We are warned against being drawn to another source. We are later told, "Christ, who is our LIFE." (Col. 3:4) If Christ is our life, then in Him is ALL for the saint.

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

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

Jan 14

How God Speaks Today

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

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

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

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

Jan 15

Revelation vs. Information

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

The purpose of God is not to give us information – not even information ABOUT Christ. Rather, God wants to give us a revelation OF Christ. Even more, according to scripture, the purpose of God is to reveal Christ IN US.

Paul said, “God revealed His Son IN ME.” (Gal. 1:16) His prayer for the saints was that God, “may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” (Eph 1:17-18)

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

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

Job never saw the answers he wanted. But He saw God. His suffering was the means by which God built the faith in him so that he was able to see God Himself.

Jan 16

Governed by the Spirit

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

Paul is not here talking about LEADINGS. He is not saying that if you are a child of God that God is going to continually feed you information and directions. It isn't that God never speaks to us, but this isn't what Paul is talking about. The translation should be, “For as many as are GOVERNED by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

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

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

Jan 17

The Gospel Concerning His Son

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

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

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

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

Our faith is to be in the living Christ who dwells in us NOW. He IS our resurrection and life. He contains the fullness of these realities – and He dwells in us. You cannot separate the Person of Christ from what He has done.

Jan 18

True Ministry

True ministry is not things we do for God, or things we do in the name of Jesus. Rather, true ministry is the result of the forming of Christ in us, and thus, of the life of Christ being manifested through us. Much ministry today is natural man performing religious works. That is why there is no real spiritual power, but only soul power.

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

“Death works in us, but life in you.” That is ministry. It is not merely study or training or the giving of sermons. Rather, it is a person who is under the work of the Cross, through which Christ is being formed in them. The result is that there is life in them – the life of Christ that ministers to others.

Jan 19

Overcoming

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

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

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

Jan 20

Victory in Christ

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

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

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

It is a fact that when we are saved, we are fully in His victory. But how do we come to live in it? Well, if His life is victory, then He must become our life, or to put it another way, we must, by faith live FROM OUT OF Christ as our life. We must lose our lives in order to find HIM as our life – and if we do, we are finding that victorious resurrection life.

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

Jan 21

One Mediator

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

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

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

Christianity is CHRIST IN YOU. Get that: Christ IN **YOU**. Thus, the very definition and meaning of Christianity – the very definition of Christianity reveals that you are already personally and individually ONE with God through Christ. Your access is personal and complete – through the very presence of our one Mediator in us.

Jan 22

A Personal Indwelling

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

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

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

Jan 23

I Am the Vine

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

Christianity, at the basis, is Christ in us. This begins with the individual. The individual has a personal and one-on-one relationship with Christ – Christ dwells first in the individual. All unity, and all the functioning of the Body of Christ, is dependent upon the relationship of Christ with the individual.

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

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

Jan 24

Edification in Christ

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

To EDIFY in Christ is to BUILD UP in Christ. This speaks of ministry that serves as spiritual food for the forming of Christ in us. It is folly to think that this can somehow happen only on a group level. It cannot even begin to bring greater life on a corporate level unless it is first happening on an individual level. Christ is first in the individual. If Christ is formed in the individual first, then this will increase the spiritual health of the entire Body of Christ.

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

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

Jan 25

A New Covenant

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

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

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

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

Jan 26

Another Gospel

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

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

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

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

Jan 27

Adjusted to the Truth

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

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

All of us have fallen into the trap of accepting whatever feeds us – if something feeds me, then this must be the Truth. No. Error feeds the flesh. The Truth will often be an offense to our flesh. Thus, only God can convict a person of the Truth.

There are many examples of cults and false movements that are built upon the violation of this one verse: Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Joseph Smith (The Mormons), Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), and many others. All of them said that God has revealed the Truth through only THEM. No. Anyone who makes such claims is a heretic. Some of them claimed special visitations from angels, or even Jesus Himself. Yet despite the fact that each of these people claim special revelation from God, what they teach is from out of themselves, or the evil one. They are deceived by their own unbelief and have deceived others.

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

Truth cannot come from out of man. Truth comes through revelation from God. But I have no right to interpret scripture according to myself. I must allow God to adjust and change ME according to the Truth." Why? Because the Truth is a Person. Adjust Him according to myself and I have created a Christ in my own image.

Jan 28

The Other Side of Travail

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

When we are suffering, our attention is upon the suffering. But Jesus is reminding us that something is being birthed that will, in that day of birth, change our perspective. He is talking about a new revelation of Himself through suffering. "You cannot see the Truth now. But you will. Hold fast by faith until that day." In one sense of the word, the fullness of what suffering will birth will never be evident here. But in the eternal ages it will be released into the fullness that God intended.

Jan 29

Faith Comes by Hearing

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

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

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

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

The ramifications of this Truth are immense. If the Truth God speaks to me is that which gives birth to faith, then the faith that is gendered can be only for the Truth that gendered it. In short, I cannot have true faith for anything other than the Truth. Faith in error, or faith that is of myself, is not true faith. It is deception.

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

Jan 30

The Trial of Faith

It is possible to believe God for certain things – if He has promised them -- but primarily, all faith comes back to a reliance upon God Himself – that He is faithful. That one Truth – that God is faithful to us personally – is going to be tried and proven over and over again. (see I Pet. 1:7) What is called, "a trial of your faith," is also a proving of the Truth upon which faith is built. If the Truth upon which my faith is based is proven to BE TRUE, then my faith will be strengthened.

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

Jan 31

Guided Into All Truth

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

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

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

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

Feb 1

Flesh vs. Spirit

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

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

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

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

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

Feb 2

A New Creature

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

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

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

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

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

Feb 3

Received From Above

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

John the Baptist was, of course, referring to the things of God. It is certainly possible for people to possess much through their own efforts, and to possess things that are outside of the will of God. John is saying that what is of God must come from God.

Paul the apostle said the same thing: "Don't you know your own selves that unless Christ is in you -- you are a reprobate?" (II Cor. 13:5) A reprobate is a person who is of no use, and without value. Add all of this up and it means that there is no inherent greatness in man. All that is of value is found in Christ -- and therefore, all that is of value is received only when we receive Him. Christianity is not a matter of God tapping into, and bringing out, our potential. It is not a matter of God enhancing us with Christ. Rather, it is a matter of receiving from above the One in whom dwells ALL the fullness of God – and in whom is ALL that God has to give.

Feb 4

Denying Self

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

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

The first thing Jesus says a person must do is, "deny himself." This is not so much about denying ourselves THINGS. No. People have tried that -- religious asceticism cannot please God because it is often nothing more than a, "work," we do to make ourselves right with Him. No. To deny self means to deny my right to myself -- it means to relinquish my self-ownership. We are to do this not merely to obey a principle. We are to do it because it the only way to walk in the Truth and walk in oneness with Christ. God Himself will lead us in a way that will result in the practical outworking of this Truth.

To deny self is ultimately to take my place in the Cross. Jesus says that. But practically, it means that I will no longer look to anything about myself as the basis for relationship with God. I will no longer live as if I belong to myself, but belong to God.

Feb 5

Taking Up the Cross

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

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

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

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

Feb 6

Losing Our Lives

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

Millions today are being taught that God wants to bless their lives, and they are being given instructions as to how to get Him to do it. Yet Jesus states here that we are to LOSE our lives for His sake. How likely is it that God will bless a life that we are told to lose?

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

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

Feb 7

Suffering the Loss of All Things

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

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

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

Losing self-righteousness is so vital and central that Paul was able to say that when he lost his, it was so that he might, "win Christ and be found in Him." But notice HOW Paul was found in Christ: No longer with a self-righteousness, but with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This was the pivotal point in Paul's walk with Christ.

Feb 8

Self-Righteousness

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

Self-righteousness is not merely a Christian walk that has a little too much law. It is actually a lie; a facade. Self-righteousness is a false righteousness, based in unbelief. Ultimately, if we are not careful, it is a position that denies Jesus Christ. It is a false Christianity.

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

Self-righteousness is self-deception. Paul said the Galatians were actually, "bewitched," or, "mesmorized." (see Gal. 3:1) They were deceived and comfortable in that deception. According to Paul, this matter is central to our freedom to, "win Christ and be found in Him." We must get this matter of righteousness settled in the Truth.

Feb 9

Christ, Our Righteousness

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

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

Paul said that he WON Christ and was found IN HIM -- not having his own righteousness, but was found in Christ with the righteousness of God. What does he mean? He tells us elsewhere. To the Corinthians he writes, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us....righteousness." (I Cor. 1:30) Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. Thus, when Paul won Christ and was found in Him, he discovered that the Christ who was living in him was the righteousness of God in him. That was all he needed.

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

Feb 10

Whatever It Takes

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

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

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

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

Feb 11

The Great Transition

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

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

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

Feb 12

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

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

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

If you read this passage from II Corinthians 4, you will discover that it was never God's purpose to make the earthen vessel look like Jesus. Neither was it ever God's purpose to take the earthen vessel and bring out the best in it. No. We are told in this verse that the VALUE (excellency) of the power is never of us, but of Christ. In fact, Paul goes on in the passage to say of the earthen vessel:

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:10-11)

The earthen vessel is to be broken by the Cross so that the life of the Treasure might shine through. We must be made weak so that Christ, the power of God, might live through us. We must lose our lives for His sake in order to find true life in Him.

Feb 13

Who Do Men Say That I Am?

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

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

It is a fact that once God reveals to us His Son, and we have embraced the Truth about Christ, that it is not possible to confess that He is anything other than the Christ, the Son of the Living God. If we are distorting the identity of Jesus, then either God has yet to reveal Him to us, or we have not heard Him. It is a fact that most people who call Jesus something less than the Son of God do not want to come to terms with Him.

Feb 14

Personal Revelation

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

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

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

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

Feb 15

Upon This Rock

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

What is the Rock upon which the church is to be built? Peter? No. The Rock is Jesus Christ – the church is built upon the personal revelation of the Christ to the individual. In short, Christ is first in the individual. Gather together many to whom Christ has been revealed and in whom Christ dwells, and you have the church.

This tells us that the church is comprised of those in whom Christ dwells -- of those who have received a personal revelation of Christ. It also tells us that the ministry of the church is to teach people that very fact – and then to edify those who are in Christ. Jesus Christ does not, “build His church,” by increasing members, money, and buildings. He builds it through the revelation of Himself to individuals. The church is built upon the Rock only to the extent that the individuals in it are built upon the Rock.

Feb 16

Jesus Christ is God

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

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

The, “doctrine of Christ,” includes all of the essential Truth about Him. Primary to this would certainly be His identity. But don’t misunderstand. John is not saying that if you do not abide in the doctrine of Christ that God will punish you by withdrawing from you. No. He is saying that if you do not live in the Truth of Christ that this is evidence that you **already** do not have a relationship with God – through your own unbelief.

If we have truly received and embraced God’s revelation of Jesus Christ we will know who He is, and be growing to live in that Truth. God reveals only the Truth about Christ. What this tells us is that all of the error about Christ – who He is and what He has done – is not because God has sent a mixed message. No. Error about the Person of Christ is the result of either relying upon yourself to figure it out, or it is the result of refusing the Truth.

Feb 17

The Only Way to God

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

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

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

Jesus is the only Way to God because He alone is the only begotten Son of God become man – and He alone died for us and was raised. He alone is Lord of all. This is not a matter of theology and it does not cater to human demands. It is the Truth.

Feb 18

The Virgin Birth

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

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

To deny the virgin birth is to deny GOD BECAME MAN. But this, in turn, is an actual denial of Jesus as Savior, and thus, of the redemption He accomplished. Only if Jesus was God become man, and lived a sinless life, could He bear the sin of the world, and be the Savior.

Someone once said that those who deny the identity of Christ usually always deny at least the two Truths of the virgin birth and the resurrection. Sure. These two Truths are essential to the identity of Jesus of God, and thus, make us accountable to Him.

Feb 19

The Son of Man

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

Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. But He entered into this world from the outside through the womb of Mary and became God Incarnate. The name by which He referred to Himself as, “God become man,” was, “The Son of Man.” Of course, the Son of Man is also the Son of God – one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man. “For in him dwelled all the fulness of Godhood bodily.” (Col. 2:9)

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

Feb 20

The Last Adam

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

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

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

Feb 21

Resurrection Life

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

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

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

This is why Paul is able to say, "Christ, the power of God." (I Cor. 1:24) In His very Person is all resurrection life. But in order to live in His power, we must be made WEAK in ourselves. (II Cor. 12:9-10) We have to stop living from out of ourselves as the source, and begin living from out of Him by faith. And through abiding in Him by faith, we have power over the old creation and over Satan himself.

Feb 22

Victory Over Death

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

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

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

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

When Jesus Christ died, the Adam race died in Him. What was raised was a new race – a new man in Christ Jesus. Thus, through the death and resurrection of Christ, the ground of Satan is undercut – left in the grave -- and a new man indwelt with resurrection life was born. This is the key to victory over all sin and death: The resurrection life of Jesus Christ. If we are in Christ, we are a new creation.

Feb 23

Baptised Into His Death

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

Jesus Christ died FOR us – He tasted a death for each of us that, if we take our place in His death – that we will never have to taste. But if this is merely a legal transaction, it will do nothing to change us. It will do nothing to set us free from the power of the old man.

Paul says that we are, “baptised into the death of Christ.” We are buried together with Him. Indeed, elsewhere he says that we are, “crucified with Christ.” (Gal. 2:20) In other words, because Jesus died FOR us, we died in Him. His death, and our union with Him in His death and resurrection, is the reason why we are set free from the old man in Adam. This is not merely legal. It is because of the living Christ who is in us.

Feb 24

Ingrafted Into Christ

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

Christianity is not a religion ABOUT Christ. Neither is salvation merely a new legal classification. Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) Salvation is also Christ in us – we are joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17) – we are joined to the One who said, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) The reason we have eternal life is because we are one with Life Himself.

In Romans 6:5 we see that the believer is, "planted," or, "ingrafted," into Christ. Thus, His death brings death to our old man. His life becomes our life. This is not theory. It is the Truth. It is what it means to be a Christian – it is the only kind of Christianity there is.

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

Feb 25

Freedom From Sin

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

Freedom from sin is never the result of following a, "how-to," list. It is not accomplished by gathering together a bunch of Bible verses and obeying them. Indeed, this is exactly what leads to legalism. Legalists always follow Bible laws and rules. The Pharisees said they followed them. But that alone accomplishes nothing.

Freedom from sin is only possible if the source of sin dies – the old man in Adam. This is the seat of the sin nature and the access point for Satan. Thus, Paul does NOT SAY, "For he that tries real hard is freed from sin," or, "He that submits to the correct teacher is freed from sin," or, "He that discovers the right Bible law is freed from sin." No. Paul says, "For he that is dead is freed from sin." This is made real by faith in Christ and in what He has done for us.

Our faith cannot be in our ability to keep laws – even if we think God will help us. No. Our faith must be in Christ. We must see that our old man is already crucified in Christ – and we must actually LOSE that life by picking up our Cross daily. Picking up our Cross doesn't make this Truth to be the Truth – but rather, it is the means by which we actually come to experience the Truth of the finality of the Cross. Are we dead in Christ? Pick up your Cross and you will find that it is true.

Feb 26

Death and Resurrection

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

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

The primary way in which I believe that, “It is finished,” is by losing my life for Jesus’ sake – by picking up the Cross daily. If I do, then, and only then, will I find true life in Him. (Matt. 16:24) But this is not a matter of my actions making what is finished by Christ to be more finished. It is not a matter of me making what is true more true. No. Rather, it is a matter of me abiding in the One IN WHOM are the power of the Cross and the resurrection. I have to experience Christ.

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

Feb 27

Faith and Victory

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. (Rom. 6:9-12)

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

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

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

Feb 28

Strength Thru Weakness

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

When we are born from above, Jesus Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) But all those dimensions of our makeup that are outside of our oneness in spirit with Christ remain natural – contrary to the One who is in us.

It is the goal of God to form Christ in us (Gal. 4:19), so that He might be manifested through us. But the natural man is in the way. Our natural man will strongly resist the new life even in religious ways. This does not always have to be conscious – it is the NATURE of the natural man to resist. So what is the solution? To turn in upon our natural man and beat our flesh over the head to force it to obey? You can try, but this won't work. Religious flesh will simply pop up in some other form.

Practically speaking, our natural man must be crucified -- made WEAK – reduced and brought down to nothing. God will bring a work of the Cross. We must be shown that there is absolutely nothing in our natural man that can walk with God. But the good news is that we can then put all of our faith in Christ and live from out of Him for all things. This is spiritual strength. There is simply no way to live from OUT OF Christ – who is the power of God (I Cor. 1:24) – unless I am being made weak in myself. As Paul said, “For when I am weak, I am strong (in Him).”

Feb 29

Purpose of God's Law

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

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

If a person is honest, the law will stop their mouth – they will stop talking about the possibilities of their own righteousness through works. The more we try to keep any law of God, the more that law will probe and expose us as hopeless. But that is not the end of the purpose of the law: It is to bring us to where we will fall to our knees and put our faith in the Person of Jesus Christ – and then live in God's grace and Truth.

Mar 1

Two Effects of Being Under Law

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

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

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

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

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

Mar 2

Rewards and Punishments

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

One subtle way Christians err on this matter is to try to earn a reward from God -- either for now or the eternal ages. But under grace there are no rewards or punishments based on works. All is based on Christ. Thus, I am either believing or not believing; I am abiding in Christ by faith, or I am not. And if I am believing, my reward is Christ Himself -- making me a joint-heir with Him; HE IS MY LIFE. And if Christ is my life, what further reward can God give me? What could I earn to add to Christ? God has freely given us all things in His Son. (Rom. 8:32) If we would grasp this it would transform our entire Christian life over to the Truth.

Mar 3

Is Faith Our Contribution?

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

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

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

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

Mar 4

Substance and Evidence

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

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

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

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

Mar 5

By Grace Through Faith

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

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

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

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

Mar 6

The Galatian Error

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

What is the basis of the Christian life? The basis is Christ – His life in us. That not only means that we were saved by grace – by the free gift of His life – but it also means that we are to live FROM OUT OF Christ as our life. His life is to be the source of all for us. His life is to be the basis of our relationship with God. This is not a matter of doctrine. It is a matter of who is the object of our faith. Is Christ our life, or have we created one out of our own works?

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

The issue in Galatians is the means of the Christian life. Abiding in Christ, and living from Christ is always the result of Christ being formed in us. Good works will be the outcome. But to try to create in myself a religious life through works is another gospel.

Mar 7

Grace Always Abounds

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

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

Really, there are only two possibilities on this matter of grace and sin. One: Grace abounds EVEN when we sin. Two: Grace abounds EXCEPT when we sin. I would ask that if grace abounds EXCEPT when we sin, then of what value is grace? We need grace to abound when we sin! That is the whole point. The only answer is that the grace of God always abounds – is eternally in place for us – EVEN when we sin.

Once we realize this, then Paul's question makes sense: Should we continue in sin because we know that grace abounds EVEN when we sin? He answers, "God forbid." Then he goes on to tell us WHY we should not continue in sin even though grace abounds when we do: Because we are dead to sin. Because we have been baptised into the death of Christ. In short, if we are in Christ, we have repented of sin. And as we grow to know Christ, we will see we don't have to sin.

Grace abounds EVEN when we sin. But if we have repented of sin, we will not want to continue in sin because grace abounds. There is no other Truth on this matter.

Mar 8

The Finality of Forgiveness

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

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

Practically speaking, this means that God will never put any sin between Himself and us – Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away all of the sin of the world -- except for ONE sin. Jesus did not die for the sin of refusing His death. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness. That is impossible – it would render the death of Christ meaningless. But regardless of whether even one person believes, Jesus has died for all other sin. Our salvation is therefore based upon whether we will believe and embrace the finality of His work for us. The sin that has no forgiveness is that we will not embrace the free and final gift that God offers in His Son.

Mar 9

Confession of Sin

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

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

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

Either the forgiveness of God is finished for us or it is not. The fact that it IS finished is a foundational Truth of Christianity. Thus, John is NOT telling us that we must confess to GET forgiven. He is telling us that we will confess if we believe we ARE forgiven. Confession is the result of light; of conviction of sin: I confess the Truth about sin in the light of the Truth that I am forgiven.

The Greek in this verse could be translated, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to have forgiven our sins, and to have cleansed us from all unrighteousness.” God’s forgiveness is already final and in place. I John is describing what happens if we see and believe it: Confession of the truth.

Mar 10

The Unpardonable Sin

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

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

Calvinists do not believe that Jesus died for all, but only for the elect. One of their arguments is what they call, “double jeopardy.” They say that if Jesus died for all then He even died for those who refuse His death. If God sends them to hell, they are condemned for the same sin for which Jesus died – double jeopardy. But No. Jesus never died for the refusal of His death. The existence of, “the sin which has no forgiveness,” proves it. It would not be mentioned as a possibility otherwise.

Mar 11

The Sin Bearer

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

What did Jesus bear on the Cross? Peter writes, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. (1 Peter 2:24) Jesus bore our sins on the Cross – in doing so, Jesus took away the sin of the world. Contrast this over and against what many of us have believed: That Jesus bore our punishment FOR sin, and thus, Jesus took away our punishment.

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

Jesus did not die for us so that death could be lifted from us and we could continue on, without change, as members of the Adam race. If that were the case then there is no end to the Adam race, and thus, no new creation in Christ Jesus.

No. Jesus bore all the sin of the Adam race, indeed, He bore the Adam race – “the body of sin.” And that Adam race died in Him. This is why when we take our place in His death we are set free from the Adam race and born from above a new creation.

Mar 12

Saved By His Life

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

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

Contrary to some teaching, Jesus Christ died on the Cross for every sin ever committed by every human being. (Except the sin of refusing His death.) At that point, the slate is clean. All sin is paid for. This was a finished and final work regardless of whether even one person believed it. Paul says, “...that if one died for all, then were all dead.” The Adam race died in Jesus Christ. All of us were included.

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

Mar 13

The Work of the Spirit of God

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

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

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

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

Mar 14

A Permanent Habitation

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

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

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

Again -- Jesus said that the Spirit could not yet been given until He ascended. He had been with people, but would later be IN them. This explains all else on the matter.

Mar 15

The Spirit of Truth

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

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

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

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

Mar 16

God With Us Always

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

These are not merely sentimental promises meant to stir emotions. Rather, they are concrete promises of God based on the reality of Christ in us. The idea that God is floating around, comes and goes, is with us one day, and far away the next, is contrary to the Truth. We may FEEL like God is that way, but the Truth is not determined or apprehended by how we feel. Indeed, even if we feel like God is with us, He is not with us because we feel like He is. He is with us because Christ is forever IN US.

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

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

Mar 17

Joy From Out of Pain

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

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

The pain of a woman in travail is all-consuming. She cannot get past it in most cases. Most pain and suffering is like that – we tend to focus upon what we are losing, or upon what we are suffering. We want out. We want relief. Usually God is silent. This passage tells us the usual reason WHY. There is a birth taking place. It may not be a literal birth, but it is a birth in type. It requires that we lose our own life and our self-ownership. Then the life of Christ will find a great release in us. Christ will be formed in us. If we lose our life, we will find Him as our life.

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

Mar 18

The Right Approach to Prophecy

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

People are sometimes obsessed with the foretelling of future events, especially to the extent that these affect them personally. There are people that have constructed Bible prophecy charts and have practically cataloged the Bible into a list of future events that will take place in a definite order. All we need to do is check off the chronological list of events as they happen and we will be ready for the next event on the list. All that being said, history has proven that Christian people are rarely correct about these matters. Remember Israel: The prophesied Messiah for whom they were waiting stood right in front those who knew those prophecies and they called Him a devil.

Jesus gives us the right approach to prophecy – hold your interpretation loosely and wait for God to bring it to pass, THEN you will know what God meant. Thus, most prophecy is not given to benefit us BEFORE it is fulfilled, but will benefit us AFTER.

Mar 19

The Journey to Galilee

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

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

Why Galilee instead of Jerusalem? Because Jerusalem represented all of their temporal expectations of an immediate kingdom with Jesus as Messiah. It was at Jerusalem that this kingdom was to be seated, and it was at Jerusalem that all of these hopes were dashed to pieces when Jesus died on the Cross. Galilee was the place the disciples were to come to receive the true kingdom of God that Jesus made possible through His resurrection.

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

Mar 20

Life From Death

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

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

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

Of course, it is so easy to focus on LOSS. It is easy to fear that some terrible thing is going to happen if you trust God. But faith is never a mistake. If we lose our lives for Jesus' sake, it may not be enjoyable – death never is – but what we will find will expose what we lost as good for nothing but the refuge heap. Seeing Jesus will do that.

Mar 21

Pressed Out of Measure

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: (II Cor. 1:8-9)

Paul was pressed to where there was nothing left in himself by which he could deal with this situation – emotionally, spiritually, or in any other way -- he was absolutely without options, and completely at the mercy of God.

This was, of course, a good thing, not a bad thing. But it never seems like it when we are going through it. Paul even admitted that he, “despaired even of life.” In other words, there was a sense of purposelessness, of futility. Left to themselves – and for a time it did seem like they WERE left to themselves – this was the end and there was no sense arguing about it. They felt a sentence of death was in themselves.

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

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

Mar 22

Perplexity Before God

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

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

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

If we read the conclusion of Job’s trial we find out the reason for God’s silence: Job did not need information or answers. He need a revelation of God Himself. Such is the case with us: God wants to reveal Christ in us. Information will never accomplish that.

Mar 23

The Unseen God

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

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

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

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

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

Mar 24

Seeing God

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

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

Job had apparently known much TRUE teaching about the Lord – in fact, he taught others that true teaching. But this is never the same as actually seeing the One about whom our teaching speaks. Job did not know what he did not see – he never realized how blind he really was. This is the same with us. God puts us through suffering so that we might come to see Jesus Christ. And when we do, we get some idea of just how blind we were. Thus, we, “repent in dust and ashes,” as to how much we thought we knew!

Mar 25

Spiritual Blindness

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

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

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

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

There are also many Christian people who are blind to Jesus Christ because they have been given false light -- they are deceived.

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

Mar 26

Spiritual Discernment

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

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

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

Mar 27

Spiritual Counterfeits

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

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

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

Mar 28

A Single Eye

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

In Greek, the word, "single," means, "free of folds or creases." So we can see what Jesus is picturing if we compare, "the body," He mentions, to a piece of paper. If we hold a piece of paper up to a light, the light will hit every part of that paper if it has no folds. But if we fold the paper, it will shut out the light, and part of it will be in darkness.

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

Jesus also tells us that it is possible to shut out God the point where you become so deceived that you actually think that the darkness in you is light. In other words, you could think you have found the Truth, when in fact, you are deceived and in error. And yet, the cause is not a lack of brains, or only a lack of teaching. We need sound teaching. But the cause is that you did not keep your eye single to God. The cure is clear: Turn to God NOW with a single eye. If you do, He will bring light.

Mar 29

Spiritual Enlightenment

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

In this epistle to the Ephesians, Paul states many wonderful Truths. The epistle is filled with teaching, doctrine, and exhortation. Yet Paul didn't say that he prayed that the Ephesians would memorize this teaching. He didn't pray that they would merely know doctrine. Rather, he prays that God would open their eyes – to a revelation of JESUS CHRIST. Why? Because only then could they understand his teaching. The fact that Paul prayed for them along this line ought to tell us our need: That we need to have our eyes opened to see Jesus Christ. Mental understanding of teaching, or an emotional reaction to it, is NOT spiritual sight.

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

There are many people today who have brought things like contemplative prayer, extra-biblical revelation, and eastern mysticism, into the church. And in reaction to these errors, there are many others who suggest that the only revelation God gives today is through the reading of the Bible. Both are wrong. Paul wrote part of the Bible. And yet He is telling us IN THAT BIBLE that his prayer is that we might receive from God, “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.”

Mar 30

Light is Judgment

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

Light is judgment. That is because when God brings light and I see, I cannot go back. I cannot say I have not seen. I am now accountable.

Jesus is pointing out that once a person sees, he will either be changed to fit the Truth, or he will change the Truth to fit him. He will ultimately do one or the other. There cannot be neutrality because though he try to be neutral, he HAS seen.

If I love light rather than darkness, I will be set free. But if I love darkness rather than the light God has given me, I will close my eyes to the light and live in a self-created darkness. My blindness will no longer be because I could not see. It will be because I refused to see.

Mar 31

Ignorance vs. Unbelief

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

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

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

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

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

Apr 1

Judgment vs. Discernment

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

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

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

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

Apr 2

Chastisement vs. Punishment

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

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

Punishment – under the normal use of the word – tends to be vindictive in nature. It is not merely the satisfying of justice. It is not necessarily redemptive. It is also the exacting of suffering. But such thinking is not the Truth pertaining to God. God never punishes because this is not the Father in heaven.

God does chastise. The word, “chastise,” means, “to train a child.” It speaks of God’s intervention into our lives for the purpose of our good and His purpose. So even though we, like most children, may despise the chastening of the Lord, it is nevertheless because God loves us. He is doing it to guide us into all Truth and to form Christ in us.

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

Apr 3

Love vs. The Wrath of God

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

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

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

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

Apr 4

Agape Love

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

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

You will note that the key here is GOD’S HIGHEST. Not human goals. And you will also note that God has already paid the ultimate personal cost – His only begotten Son.

This explains much about how God works. God speaks the TRUTH in love. But He does speak the TRUTH! It is not love to lie to people about their condition before God, or to help them to destroy themselves. Yet today this is exactly what is being passed off as Christian love. Preach the Truth today – and do it in agape love – and you will be considered mean spirited and judgmental. Sure, it IS possible to preach the Truth in that kind of a wrong spirit. But this does not change the Truth itself. You cannot love another if you are not telling them the Truth.

Agape love is a commitment to God’s highest for the individual loved, regardless of cost to them, or to us. It is redemptive and Christ centered. This is how God loves us and how we will love others if we know Him.

Apr 5

Because He First Loved Us

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

Read in the Bible the many commands to love one another. Then try to do it. You might want to do it. That is good. And you might convince yourself for awhile that you have succeeded. But you cannot do it. You cannot love with the agape love of God. The best you will muster up a human love. Indeed, the commandment to love one another has often been turned into just another LAW by some Christians – something we must do to keep right with God. The suggestion is, we must love others to be loved by God.

The only way in which to love another with the agape love of God is to first realize and receive God’s love for you. Indeed, we cannot even love God Himself until we first experience His love for us. Everything in Christianity works according to this principle: It is always vertical FIRST – from God down to us by His grace – and only then will we have to give to others out of what God has given to us. How could we somehow generate the love of God from out of ourselves, unless we first have received, and been changed, by the love God has for us? I must abide in the Vine as an individual branch – and then I can have to give to the other branches. Reverse this and you will have a religious love that is produced from out of the flesh – and which caters to the flesh.

Apr 6

Vertical then Horizontal

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

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

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

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

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

Apr 7

Freely Received and Given

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

God has given all things freely in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:32) Therefore, how could we do otherwise? This is an especially revealing question once we realize that Jesus gave these instructions as He sent His disciples out into ministry for the first time. Has ministry ever operated in this great Truth?

What does it mean to FREELY receive? It means that you have received solely by grace. You did not earn, merit, or do anything, for what God has given to you. The foundation of the gospel is that all things are, “by grace through faith.” What does it mean to FREELY give? Well, first of all, Jesus said that we are freely give BECAUSE we have freely received – really, we are to give from OUT OF what we have freely received. This makes it certain: We are to give in the same spirit that we have received.

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

Apr 8

No Condemnation

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

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

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

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

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

Apr 9

Conviction vs. Condemnation

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

Conviction from God is never condemnation. Condemnation and conviction BOTH carry a sense of hopelessness within ourselves – there is nothing we can do to help ourselves or to find our way back to God. But condemnation leaves me there without resolution. Conviction will always carries with it a realization, yes, of our hopelessness because of sin, but also of God's forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ.

Conviction is LIGHT. It is God showing me the Truth about my sin, indeed, about my true condition. But Jesus Christ IS the Light, and thus, all conviction of sin that is from God will be carried in a realization of the Savior. God shows me that I have sinned against Him so that I can repent be delivered. God is a redemptive God. All He does is with that intention.

The difference between conviction and condemnation is often FAITH. If I believe and rely upon Christ I will realize that there is no condemnation for those in Christ. If I don't believe, there really isn't any alternative but condemnation in hopelessness.

Apr 10

Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

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

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

You will note that TRUE REPENTANCE is not be be repented of. In other words, it is never recanted or taken back. It is a one way street and permanent. This is not to say we will never sin again, or commit that same sin again. But it does mean that we will not want to sin. We will want to be free of the sin. Our moral mind and hearts will have changed towards God regarding the sin. We will be seeking Him for true freedom.

Godly sorrow is not the result of embracing the Truth about my sin, but is instead a rejection of the Truth. Rather than be based in a desire to be free of the sin, it is based in a desire to be free of the consequences FOR sin. I am not sorry because I have sinned against God. Instead, I am sorry because sin makes me look bad, and hurts my sense of self-esteem.

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

Apr 11

Repentance and Faith Toward God

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

Repentance and faith toward God are the only kind of repentance and faith that are real. They are not religious exercises. These speak of our relationship with God.

The primary sin of which I must repent is unbelief. All other sins can, in one way or another, be traced back to unbelief. Unbelief is rooted in my right to own myself. Thus, I must repent of that core sin. And if I do repent of unbelief, then I will BELIEVE – the result being that I will LOSE my life into the hands of Jesus. My faith will be IN HIM.

Here we see the ultimate outcome of faith in Christ. I cannot say I trust Christ if I continue to own myself. Real faith will take us to where we lose our lives to Him.

We might say that true repentance results in a RENOUNCING of our old life in Adam; of our sin of self-ownership. We renounce our old life and lose it for Jesus' sake. We can renounce our old life even if we don't think we are guilty of many sins. Why? Because we are renouncing the life that contains the nature of all sin.

Apr 12

God's Gift of Conviction

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

God does love us, and repentance is His will for all people. But our repentance is not FOR God – it is for US. God already knows what we are, and what we need. We are the ones who are lost and blind. Repentance is the result of God bringing light and us embracing the Truth. We say the same thing about our sin as God already says – this is confession. And we do so because we know that God is faithful to have forgiven us in Christ Jesus.

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

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

Apr 13

God is Light

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

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

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

Why is THAT the message? Well, we would not get far in the message if God were not Light personified, would we? We could not trust Him.

If we need to see the Truth, we need to make our eye single unto the Lord, and if we do our whole body will be filled with Light. (Matt. 6:22) In other words, we will see God.

Apr 14

Knowing Jesus Christ

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

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

This knowledge of Jesus is different than any theological or academic knowledge. You cannot study your way into the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. Neither can you drum it up by some form of meditation. The only way in which to come into the true knowledge of Jesus is exactly the way Paul said: The Christ who dwells in us must be formed in us. Paul said that the work of the Cross is the means by which we lose ourselves and come to be found in Him – "that I may know Him."

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

Apr 15

Grace and Peace

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

How do we come to have grace and peace? By controlling our emotions? Only if God hands them to us out of the blue? No. Grace and peace are the result of knowing the Truth about God and His Son Jesus Christ. Think about that. Knowing God produces peace. Doesn't that tell us a lot about the God we are to know? And doesn't that tell us that the knowledge of God, as the Bible means it, is an inward realization?

People get nervous when they hear such terms as, "inward realization." They express worries when you tell them that God must reveal Christ IN US, and that He must be formed IN US. The fear is that you mean that what God reveals can contradict scripture. Or that you are talking about some form of Gnosticism. No. The Christ God will reveal and form is the same One shown in scripture. But He will be a Living Christ – Living in You.

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

Apr 16

The Peace of God

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

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

The peace of the world is the result where there is no conflict. If I have gotten my own way I will have peace. If I have won a battle I will have peace. Or if I run away from a battle I will have peace. The peace of this world has nothing to do with relationship with God. It occurs when circumstances agree with my old life in Adam.

It is entirely possible for a Christian person to have peace – but for it to be the peace of this world. It is a façade. There are Christians who are walking in the light of their own mind, and totally in the flesh. They can have a worldly peace – to the extent that their circumstances are at one with what inwardly binds them. God wants Christ to bind us – and if we are one with Him, and know Him, we will have His peace.

Apr 17

The Christ of Division

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

Jesus Christ will bring division to every unity that is not based in Himself. He will do this so that by breaking up false unity He can establish true unity.

For two thousand years, professing Christians have tried to create and impose unity. Unity is often imposed by rules supposedly taken out of the Bible. “You must belong to our church or submit to our authority;” “You must believe and do as we believe and do.” Well, this CAN create a unity – including a unity around even heresy. Most cults have strong unity – the people all believe and practice the same error. Unity is never a proof of the Truth. It is only a proof of agreement.

The NT teaches us to KEEP the true unity that is in Christ – the implication being that since HE is the Vine, each branch needs to first abide IN HIM as an individual. For if each branch individually abides in the One True Vine they will automatically be one in Christ – automatically be one with each other – unified IN Christ.

Where Jesus is present, all who want Him will want to abide in Him, and thus be unified in Him. But likewise all who do not want Him will separate themselves or need to be separated. Jesus came to destroy all unity that is not solely in Himself.

Apr 18

One Mind

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

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

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

Contrast this over and against the attempts to create unity in the church through the power of the flesh – especially through some authority system. Believers are told to adopt the mind of the leader. Then this is proclaimed as unity because everyone has the same mind. They do. But this same mind is not the mind of Jesus Christ. Christians are to have ONE MIND – but that ONE MIND is the mind of Christ.

Apr 19

Equipping the Saints

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

According to Jesus Himself, as recorded in John 14-16, the present work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ to us, in us, and through us. This revelation of the same Christ in separate individuals will result in the unity of the faith for all. Thus, any unity that is imposed by law is not unity in Christ. Rather, it is a unity in that law.

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

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

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

Apr 20

Knowing God

Knowing God in Christ is a primary purpose of God – it is a central outcome of the Redemption. In fact, knowing God is presented as an ultimate goal of the New Covenant. God says:

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

This is CHRIST IN US. God intends to reveal Christ, not only TO us, but IN US. This is the mystery hidden from generations past, but now revealed to the saints. It is the purpose of God – that the individual believer be joined to the Lord – and as a result come into a realization of Jesus Christ – have Christ formed in them. (Gal. 4:19)

Anyone can read about God and accumulate theological knowledge. But the knowledge of God spoken of in the Bible is an experiential knowledge that is the result of being joined to Him in resurrection union. It is the renewal of our mind according to the knowing of God.

Apr 21

Christ Revealed In Us

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

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

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

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

Apr 22

Forgiveness vs. Deliverance

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

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

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

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

Apr 23

Accountability to God

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

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3:6) When a person is born in Adam they born of the flesh and are void of the life of God. But we all develop different versions or manifestations of the flesh. This is greatly impacted by our upbringing, environment, and of course, personal choices, whether we realize what we are doing or not. All of these go into making us the member of the Adam race that we are. Some people end up with terrible baggage through abuse or exposure to evil. Great bondage to different sin can result. We may not be directly to blame for much of this. Others turn out self-righteous and religious – that is their version of the flesh. Of course, we can spend our time assigning blame for what ails us, and in many cases, that blame would be justly assigned. But in the end, no matter why we have the baggage we have, and no matter what our bondage to sin might be, the solution is the same: Deliverance through Jesus Christ. For that, once we see the Truth, we ARE responsible.

Apr 24

The Sin of the Human Race

Jesus Christ died for all – for every human being that ever lived. Thus, we are told, “all were dead.” (II Cor. 5:14) Likewise, Paul writes, “When we were yet enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” (Rom. 5:10a) At that point, all sin is taken away. The slate is clean. There is no sin keeping any human being from God because all sin died in Christ.

However, at that point neither is any human being saved. Jesus died for all, but in only those who believe are saved – you have to relinquish your life to Him and be joined to Him – planted into His death. Only then will you also be planted in His resurrection. Sure, because by faith you are planted into Christ Himself, and He is the embodiment of His death and resurrection.

Now note: If all sin is taken away by the death of Christ for each human being, as an act of grace completely independent of us, then the responsibility upon us once we hear the Truth is FAITH. Thus, the only sin that can keep us from being saved is UNBELIEF.

The primary sin of the human race is unbelief. Unbelief is the neglect or refusal to turn to Jesus Christ as the solution for all sin. If I fully and finally refuse Christ I have committed a sin that has no forgiveness. Jesus never died for the sin of refusing His death. God cannot forgive the sin of refusing His forgiveness. This is why this sin is the unpardonable sin, and will doom us. Any other outcome is morally impossible.

The good news is that the sin that cannot be forgiven only remains unforgiven if we continue in it. If we will turn from unbelief to faith we are no longer in unbelief. And if we desire, we can do it anytime. It is never too late to repent and turn to Jesus Christ.

Apr 25

The Wages of Sin

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

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

There are a number of ways in which the wages of sin is death. Certainly, God is going to judge each of us – if we refuse Christ, who IS the Life, we will receive what we have chosen in our unbelief: Death. But there is another way in which the wages of sin is death: Sin kills. It is the law built into the moral fabric of our makeup – if I sin against God the result will be spiritual death. Why? Not necessarily because God punishes me. No. Rather, because I am rejecting Life Himself. Man is a moral creature who is made FOR God. There is no life outside of God for man. Thus, if we reject God and sin against Him, we will reap death – it is the only thing we CAN reap if we refuse The Life.

Apr 26

The Provision of God

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. (Matt. 6:31-33)

You can reason about this all you want but Jesus is saying that the provision of God for His children is so certain that we can actually afford to set aside all anxious thought. There would be no basis for refusing to take anxious thought otherwise – I mean, if God's provision were in question we probably should take anxious thought because we are left to ourselves.

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

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

Yet there is a caveat: But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mat 6:33) Provision from God is a by-product of the seeking the kingdom, i.e., Jesus as Lord of my life. The provision of God happens under the Lordship of Jesus. Anything else would undermine His purpose.

Apr 27

Provision in Christ

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

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

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

Apr 28

When God Doesn't Provide

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

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

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

If we can live from Christ and trust God even when His material provision is not flowing – if we can live NOT by bread alone, but on the basis of His life – then God can eventually provide for us and it will not undermine His spiritual purpose.

Apr 29

True Humility

True humility is not the result of putting oneself down, or of denying oneself enjoyment. Rather, true humility is only possible if I see the greatness of Jesus Christ.

Human thinking tells us that we either have high self-esteem or low self-esteem. And much Christian teaching today is geared to affirming high self-esteem in Christian people. Indeed, many are teaching that God wants us to have high self-esteem and that to know God loves us will actually enhance that. No. That is a lie. For both high and low self-esteem are a focus upon SELF. We need to be delivered from self.

The Bible states directly that no person ever hated his own flesh. Our problem is not self-hate. Rather, it is too much self-love. What we call self-hate is really a frustrated self-love. God's love doesn't make us love ourselves more. It makes us love HIM.

To know Jesus Christ does not make us feel good about ourselves. But neither does it make us feel bad about ourselves. It delivers us out of needing to feel anything about ourselves at all. We are free to stop fussing over ourselves and to leave ourselves alone to God. But we will never understand any of this unless we begin to see Jesus.

Apr 30

Not With Words of Wisdom

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

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

People cannot come to truly know God loves them through an emotional reaction. Indeed, we cannot believe WITH our emotions, anymore than we ought to believe our emotions always reflect the Truth. No. Rather, in the above verse, Paul is telling us that what satisfies our natural man in a religious way can often be contrary to the Cross of Jesus Christ. Why? Because to satisfy natural man keeps alive that which Jesus said we must LOSE by picking up our Cross. People need to get back to the basic Truth of Jesus Christ crucified. The goal of God is not to make us feel better, or to make us feel bad, about ourselves. Instead, God wants to make us want to be delivered from ourselves. He wants to reveal Himself IN US, and to become our life.

May 1

The Gospel

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

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news, "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 1:3) The gospel, therefore, is a proclamation of the Truth about a PERSON. The good news is the proclamation of Jesus Christ – yes, what He has done, but essentially, about who He is today IN US. The gospel is the message of salvation. But the gospel is not merely a message of how to be saved. Salvation is a Person. The gospel therefore includes all of the Truth of life in Jesus Christ.

Paul warned the Galatians, "You have deserted HIM that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Can we see that Paul considered life in Christ after salvation to also be the gospel? He affirms that the Galatians church had been saved through the gospel, but then he states, "having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3) If my Christianity is not based on Christ in me – His life and Truth – then I am under another gospel. In short, the salvation message must be the Truth – but so must the life in Christ that results. I must not only believe the message, but I must live in the One who is the living message

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

May 2

The Mystery of God

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

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

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

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

May 3

The First Sermon

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

The first sermon given through the indwelling of the Spirit of God was given by Peter in Acts 2. But if you read that sermon, it is all about Jesus Christ. Today some like to point to what happened that day as a template for what God does today – people acting drunk and speaking in tongues – but Peter quickly gathers all that was happening into a message about the Person of Christ and what God now desires to do through Him.

Peter ended his sermon with the above verse. It carried the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Acts records, “Now when they heard, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you INTO the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

What was the conclusion of the events of that day? People being convicted of their lost condition and then being told to REPENT and be baptised through the Spirit of God INTO Jesus Christ. That is the Greek meaning: Immersed INTO Christ. Joined to Him. In other words, the outcome of the gospel message is supposed to be, yes, faith in all that Christ has done for us, but unto this end -- Christ Himself NOW, IN each of us.

May 4

Joined to the Lord

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

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

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

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

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

May 5

Life From Above

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

Jesus told Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit...You must be born again.” (John 3:6) All who are born in Adam are born of the flesh. Flesh is all we can ever be – and all that is built into the flesh is all we can ever possess. All that we are in Adam was permanently ruined through the sin of Adam. But Jesus never suggests that the Adam race is going to be fixed. He never suggests that there is any destiny for the Adam race except what God originally judged: Death. The solution, therefore, for all who are born in Adam is a NEW BIRTH – we must be born FROM ABOVE.

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

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

May 6

The Spirit of Christ

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

In God's Word, different terms are often used to refer to the same Truth. Such is the case in this passage. Paul is here using terms that all refer to the indwelling of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit. He uses the terms, "in the Spirit;" "the Spirit of God;" "the Spirit of Christ;" "Christ be in you..the Spirit is life;" the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus;" and, "His Spirit that dwells in you." Since Paul states in Ephesians that there is ONE SPIRIT, (Eph. 4:4) it means that all of these descriptions refer to that one Spirit.

This allows us to conclude that, "Christ in you," means that we are joined to Him in by that same Spirit – i.e., our human spirit is joined to His Spirit – which is elsewhere named, "The Comforter," or, of course, "the Holy Spirit," or PARACLETE.

Why is this important? Because so often when we read that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, or that the Spirit dwells in us, we tend to focus upon the Spirit as something or someone separate from Christ – or as a FORCE that does things to us in our lives. This blurs and clouds the fact the Spirit in us means CHRIST IN US -- that is, Christ dwells in us by the means of the Spirit of God. Indeed, the purpose of the Spirit of God is to reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us.

May 7

The Man From Above

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

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

You will notice that when Christ joins us to Himself the natural or flesh is not obliterated. No. Christ is ADDED, so to speak, to the person we already are. The power of the old man in Adam is broken – something we will have to learn and experience by faith – but not the presence or possibility. The goal of God will be to bring all that is of the natural under the work of the Cross so that Christ in us might govern.

May 8

The Dividing of Soul from Spirit

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

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

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

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

May 9

The Living Word

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

The Word of God is not merely the Bible – the Bible is the written Word. But Jesus Christ is the Living Word. Of course, there is only ONE true word, and so the Living Word will always agree completely with the written Word. But the point is this: God is speaking to us today IN HIS SON; He is speaking Son-wise. (Heb. 1:1) God is revealing Christ TO us and IN us. This is, afterall, the why His Spirit was given.

Jesus Christ in us IS the testimony of Jesus Christ. He is God's Living Word governing us to the point where we are living evidence or testimony of the Risen Christ. People ask for evidence that Jesus Christ exists, and mock when God provides none that satisfies them. But God is not concerned. Jesus Christ IS the evidence of God. (see I John 5:9-11) And when Christ comes to dwell in us, His very presence becomes a living testimony to God Himself in us, and through us. This is what it means to become a witness for Christ. We have the evidence in us, and He is seen by others.

May 10

The Preaching of the Cross

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

In Jesus Christ, the Adam race was brought to an end on the Cross. God is not interested in fixing up the Adam race, or in bringing anything out of it that He can use. This is why we are told that if want to follow Jesus, we must pick up our cross and LOSE our lives for His sake. (see Matt. 16:24) God is interested only in His Son, and His interest in us is as the vessels that will hold Christ, the Treasure. (II Cor. 4:7)

Today this is foolishness even to many professing Christians. You hear almost NO teaching at all about Christ in us, God's purpose to form Christ in us, and certainly almost nothing about the necessity of the Christian person losing their life under the work of the Cross in order to discover true life in Christ. You may hear that Jesus bore our sins on the Cross. You may even hear such terms as, "spiritual formation," wherein people are taught how to form Christ in themselves through various techniques. But where the reality of the personal Cross is omitted, the Truths of Christ can only be applied to the OLD LIFE – and brought down to an earthly, natural level. It may look good and will be very religious. But it isn't of new life – it is the old life practicing religion -- because the means of new life is omitted: The Cross.

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

May 11

Evidence of Spiritual Death

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

You will note that Paul does NOT say that if a person thinks the Cross to be foolish that God is going to punish them -- by causing them to perish. No. Rather, he is saying that if a person thinks the Cross is foolish that it is evidence that they are ALREADY in the process of perishing. There is a reason for his conclusion: The Cross is the first step to life in Christ. Thus, if we think that the first step to life is foolishness, then we have obviously not taken it. We are perishing.

Much of what professing Christian people say is out of ignorance. But when someone says that we do not need to repent in order to be saved, or that we do not need to come to the Cross – is it possible that they are saved? No. They can't be saved. That is not a judgment. It is simply a realization that if someone says the Cross is unnecessary that they surely haven't come to it for themselves. Out of their own mouth is the evidence that they are already perishing.

May 12

God's Only Solution

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

There is only one way to be delivered from sin: The source must die. We cannot be delivered from sin by merely being forgiven FOR sin – no, forgiveness removes the penalty for sin, but does not remove the sin. There must come a death to what Paul calls, “the body of sin,” and, “the old man in Adam.” This was accomplished by Christ once and for all on the Cross for all of us. The way in which it becomes experiential to us is if we take our place in the Cross, pick it up daily, and come under it's power. The Cross is death to the old so that we might live in Jesus in the new.

“Words of wisdom,” cannot substitute for the Cross. I cannot sweet talk someone into being a Christian. I cannot logically corner them into picking up the Cross. I cannot affirm and pat on the back the old man in Adam and to try to help him improve himself. Neither can I substitute for the Cross by memorizing scripture, attending church, or by trying my best to live for Christ. No. I have to pick up the Cross and DIE – and this is exactly what I must preach to others. Omit the Cross and you have a false gospel.

Paul said, “When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Adam died in Christ. People must be shown the dreadful creature Adam is so that they will voluntarily come to the Cross and thank God that Jesus has died for them on it.

May 13

The Cross is the Power of God

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

The Cross is the power of God. But in what sense? The Cross is the power of God over the old creation, and thus, Satan. That is because the Cross brought an end to the old through death, thus breaking it's power over those who are raised anew in Christ.

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

When Jesus died on the Cross He bore in His body the Adam race. Thus, Adam died in Christ. So if I come to Christ and take my place in His death, I am severed from the old earthly realm over which Satan rules. But I am born anew of the Spirit – a new creation. Thus, the death and resurrection of Christ delivers us from the realm of Satan – the earthly. The Cross is the gateway – it is the power of God unto that end.

May 14

The Broken Power of Satan

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

When Adam sinned and forfeited life from God, he not only died spiritually, but the entire earthly realm over which God had given him dominion was put under a curse. (Gen. 3:17) From that point, nothing could be produced out of the earthly realm that was spiritual. And even the physical that was produced required a great deal of struggle. In addition, Satan was cast down to the earthly realm. He is the god of this world, with access to all that is earthly.

Jesus Christ became a human being and lived a sinless life. He brought the human being into the fullness of what originally intended for Adam. Then He offered Himself to bear the sin of the world – really to bear all that is earthly pertaining to humankind. This all died when Christ died. What was raised was a new man in Christ. Death had severed the old creation, and resurrection in Christ had birthed the new.

So what we see is that those who are in Christ have a life inside of them that is not of this earthly. Satan therefore does not have access – indeed it is resurrection life which is victory over Satan in every way. But Satan does continue to be able to approach the natural man that continues to exist in us outside of our union in Christ.

The point is this: The ground of Satan, or his point of access, has been cut out from under him. Not by obliterating it, but by joining us to the Lord in Spirit. The Christian life is therefore one of living FROM new ground -- His victory of resurrection life. The only power that remains for Satan is that of deception. This is why we must know Truth.

May 15

Dead to Sin

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

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

You will notice that the Bible never says that sin is obliterated. It never says the sin is dead. No. It says that we are dead to sin. Sin is still present as a possibility in our natural man. But because we are raised as a creature who is alive in Christ, we don't have to obey it. Sanctification is the process wherein we learn how to live out this Truth.

May 16

Glorying In the Cross

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

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

Do we realize what a freedom this is? To have nothing to protect about myself? To have nothing to promote about myself? To have nothing that I need to prove to anyone, including God? To be able to leave myself alone to God? To simply rejoice in the fact that that Christ is in me – and that God has given me all things freely IN HIM?

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

May 17

Crucified to the World

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

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

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

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

Resurrection life is not of this earthly realm. It is the life of Christ Himself. Thus, those in whom Christ dwells are not OF this world. They are of Him – and because we are planted in His death and resurrection we are severed from this earthly realm. We no longer belong to it and need not live controlled by it. This is what it means to, “walk in the Spirit.” We are no longer governed by the earthly, but only by Christ who is in us.

May 18

A New Kind of Life

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

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

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

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

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

May 19

Two Kinds of Humanity

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

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

How does a person die to Adam? By faith he repents or renounces his old life, and takes his place in the Cross of Jesus Christ. How does that person come alive in Christ? Exactly the same way – for unless we are crucified in Him we cannot be raised in Him. Yet if we are united with Him in His death, we shall be united with Him in His resurrection. (Rom. 6:5)

The human being that is raised in Christ is a different kind of human being than one born in Adam. The difference is HIS LIFE – his life is now Christ.

May 20

Abandonment to God

How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. (1 Cor. 15:35-36)*

This verse contains a principle about resurrection that is applicable to our Christian walk: Abandonment to God includes a relinquishment of knowing the outcome. We must sow by a death, but we don't determine what is raised. We know generally that if we lose our lives that we will find true life in Him – but until this actually happens, it is all expectation and not yet realization. It is foolish to think we could fully grasp what is not yet raised. The birth has not yet happened. We cannot know the child.

Abandonment to God in faith is like that. We abandon ourselves to God – usually through some situation. True abandonment means I take my hands off and leave it to God. That is a death in me in faith TO God over the situation. I may have hopes of what God will do. But I cannot know until there is a resurrection what God intended.

Of course the situation over which I surrender isn't the issue. I am the issue. A situation isn't raised from the dead as much as I am raised.

This can happen within this age. But there is much in this age that we abandon to God -- but is never raised HERE. The fruition of our abandonment never seems to come about. But God is saying that all of it has a release in the eternal ages. What seems like a little faith here may carry great life within that is only released there. God may be forming Christ in us NOW, but the fullness of what He has formed will be released in the resurrection THEN.

May 21

The Work of Christ Today

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

This verse describes what Christ is doing today – He is building His kingdom by putting all of His enemies under His authority. His enemies once included US: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Rom 5:10) The Greek word translated, “reconcile,” means, “to exchange enmity for friendship.” This is HOW Jesus prefers to put all enemies under His feet: By saving them. And then by driving out all that is at enmity to Christ from out of the lives and makeup of His people.

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

May 22

The Inward Kingdom

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

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

The kingdom of God is the rule or realm of God. It isn't a certain place over which God rules, but rather, it is God's rule itself – over any person or place. In the OT, God used the idea of a kingdom to convey to them what He wanted to reveal to them during that time. But in the NT, there is a great mystery finally unveiled that was not revealed to prior generations: Christ in you, the hope of glory. WE are the temple of God in which He rules as Lord. Thus, the picture of a kingdom is the picture of the indwelling of the Person of Christ: Christ in you, the hope of glory, is the essence of the kingdom.

Jesus Christ in us equals the kingdom of God in us. Jesus is Lord and the sovereignty that extends from His Person and His Life is the kingdom of God. As for a coming reigning and ruling in the eternal ages, God will only populate His kingdom with those in whom He has established the kingdom through the indwelling of Christ.

May 23

Baptized for the Dead?

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

There have been a number of silly interpretations given to this passage, but in context, Paul is talking about Jesus subduing all of His enemies under His feet so that He can return and all of the dead in Christ can be raised.

“The dead,” for whom we are baptized are those same saints who are asleep. We are not baptized so that they might be saved, but we are baptized into our own death – figuratively in an ongoing way – so that the life of Christ that emerges from this can add to the Body of Christ, of which both they and we are part. “Death in us, but life in you. (see II Cor. 4:12) Paul referred to this same work in Colossians: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh **for his body's sake**, which is the church.” (Col 1:24) The fruition of this, of course, will be only fully realized when we are all raised together at the Second Coming.

May 24

Witnesses of Christ

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

What did Jesus say, in John chap.14- 16, would be the work of the Holy Spirit? The work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus Christ TO us, IN us, and through us. In other words, once Christ dwells in us by joining us to Himself through the Holy Spirit, the work of that Spirit is to form Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19) To have Christ, "formed," in us means for Him to be, "inwardly realized or expressed." And as Christ is formed in us, we are changed and adjusted so that we can be, "formed together with Him." (Rom. 8:29)

Paul described to the Corinthians a little more about how Christ is formed in us. He said, "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of the Lord Jesus may also be made manifest in our body." (II Cor. 4:10) Well, if Christ is formed in me and I begin to manifest Christ, then I am a witness to Him. In other words, I am EVIDENCE of the risen Christ.

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

May 25

The Fruit of the Vine

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

To ABIDE in Christ is possible only if I am first IN HIM. But once that is so, I have to live FROM HIM – I have to live drawing upon His life. Of course this is done by faith. But it also requires that I lose my life. Christ cannot be my life if I am still alive in myself.

Jesus said that if we would abide in Him in that way – as a branch abides in the Vine -- that we would bear much fruit. Now let's ask: What effort does a branch have to put forth to bear fruit? None at all. A branch does have to grunt real hard, or become all self-conscious as to whether it is bearing fruit. To bear fruit, the branch need only abide in the Vine. And if it does, then the fruit is not the fruit of the branch, but OF the Vine.

The way to bear Godly fruit is by living in the Vine. Someone once said that those with the most Godly character are those who are the least conscious of it, and that those with the least Godly character are the ones most conscious of themselves. This is a fact. If we see the truth that we can do nothing of ourselves, and by faith fully rely upon Christ as our life, we will leave ourselves alone. The fruit will come. But it won't be our fruit. It will be HIS. Our life will be hid with Christ in God.

May 26

Extensions of the Vine

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

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

The saint who knows Christ is going to ask Him to do HIS will. Would we seriously want to ask God to do something He does not want to do? Would we actually want Him to answer that? No. The saint wants God to do HIS will, and only HIS will.

The purpose of God here is clear: We, as a branch, are to grow to where we are extensions of the Vine. As extensions of the Vine – or we might say members of His Body – we are going to grow to where we ask Him to do His will. To, “ask,” comes out of a readiness and desire to embrace. And He will do it because He always desires to do His will – that is why it IS His will. There is no picture of struggle here. It is a branch growing to be so much one with the Vine that the Vine can do His will in and through the branch. The branch will ASK for this.

May 27

The Shadow of Christ

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

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

The Old Covenant was a shadow of Christ. It truthfully represented Him. But it was not alive. Under the OT, the Spirit could be WITH people. But the Spirit could not be IN people. The New Covenant is not the shadow, but the reality of Christ Himself. This is why all through the NT we are told that to try to remain under the law is death – Christ will be of no effect to us – it will be like He isn't even in us. It will be like trying to live in a relationship with the shadow of Christ. Christ is not a shadow. He is Life Himself – the Living embodiment of all that was in the OT. The New Covenant is Christ in us.

May 28

Reconciled to God

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

Reconciliation is the bringing of two parties together – the Greek word means, “to exchange enmity for friendship.” But you will never read in the Bible that God ever needed to be reconciled to man. No. Man needed to be reconciled to God.

Jesus Christ reconciled the world to God by His finished work. But not by changing God. No. Rather, He changed the human race by making a new creature. Everything that stood between God and man was IN MAN as a race – and Jesus took that upon Himself on the Cross and died. Indeed, Jesus not only did a work that reconciled man back to God, but HE IS that reconciliation in each believer. Those who believe become one with God through Jesus Christ.

Now, you will note that Jesus completed this work of reconciliation for the entire world – not just for believers. But we do need to believe and be raised in Christ to enter into that reconciliation. Thus, it is possible to refuse to believe – possible to refuse reconciliation to God. In that case, there is nothing more God can do for us.

May 29

The Finished Work

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

God has already forgiven the entire human race because of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ has FINISHED His redemptive work, God is finished forgiving. And His forgiveness is total for every sin ever committed, or that will be committed.

Our faith does not contribute to this finished work. Nor can our unbelief subtract from it. It is a finished reality for us -- regardless of whether we believe it or not. Thus, our faith doesn't convince God to forgive us. Rather, by faith we embrace this Truth that He already has.

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

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

May 30

Christ of No Effect

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

The words, “of no effect,” actually mean, “as if you are separated from Christ,” in NT Greek. This is the result of living the Christian life on the basis of my own righteousness – using rules, laws, and standards. That was the Galatian error.

We are encountering a Truth here that is very serious – life in Christ depends on it -- not in the sense of WHETHER I am saved, but in the sense of Christ as my life AS a saved person. If I try to live under law I may as well be separated from Christ. He will not function AS my life. But if I live under grace, then all my union with Christ will result in a flow of Christ AS my life.

Now, do we actually think that Paul is talking about doctrinal issues? That all we need to do is understand the doctrine of law and grace, give assent to it, and we have it? No. This is a faith issue. And again – whether Christ is functioning AS OUR LIFE is at stake.

Paul states this same Truth in a positive way elsewhere: “I suffered the loss of all things, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.” (Phil. 3:8-9) We have to lose all righteousness based in anything about ourselves – and only then will the life of Christ within us actually function as our life. Indeed, only then will we be found in Him.

May 31

The Galatian Solution

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

If Christ is of, “no effect,” to us, we may as well be separated from Him. Christ will not be our life. We will have carved out another life, based on law-keeping. This is what happens when we replace CHRIST IN US with the keeping of laws as the means of living the Christian life. What could be more serious an error?

If we try to live on the basis of ourselves and our works, then we are deceived – and by definition Christ cannot be formed in us because we are forming ourselves according to law. This Galatian error had only one solution. Paul said to them, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you!” (Gal. 4:19) The phrase, “formed in you,” here could read, “inwardly realized and expressed.” This is God’s purpose in His people and the solution to all things – it is what happens if we walk with all of our faith solely in Christ as our life.

Jun 1

Righteousness Apart from Law

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

There are thousands of professing Christians today who believe that grace is the desire and power to do God's will – i.e., the power to keep right with God through works. But unwittingly, they are saying grace puts them back under law – only now with the power to keep it. There are many such errors in the church. Some state this error directly as a doctrine. Others simply think and live that way, without realizing it.

The grace of God is not given as a power to keep God's law -- so that we can stay right with God by works. In reality, we are right with God solely by His grace through faith completely apart from works. That is because the grace of God is not a power, a thing, or a classification. The grace of God is a Person – Christ Jesus – He is the One who is, “full of grace and Truth.” (John 1:7) And if Christ is in us, then because He is in us, and only because He is in us – we are right with God APART from any law-keeping.

Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. (I Cor. 1:30) Did our works earn us Christ? Can our works add to Christ or subtract from Him as the living righteousness of God in us? Does grace, or faith, merely give us power to keep God's law so we can keep right with God through our works? Paul said, “The law is not of faith.” (Gal. 3:12) What could be more clear? Read the phrase again: “Righteousness apart from law.” That one phrase tells us that Christ as our righteousness has NO connection to our works whatsoever.

Jun 2

What the Law Says

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

What does the law say to those who are trying to keep right with God by obeying it? It says, “You are guilty. In fact, you are dead. So your mouth had better stop speaking about the possibilities of your own righteousness.” The more we try to obey God's law, the more we are exposed as dead. Why? Because the fundamental problem with man is not simply found in what he does or does not do. The problem is what man IS. The Adam race is spiritually dead – dead to God. You cannot cure a dead person by giving them laws to keep. You have to give him life. Christ, the Life, must give them Himself.

God's law was given to expose the Truth about us. It was supposed to show us our dead condition so that we would finally realize that it is only through grace in Jesus Christ that we have any hope. What folly, therefore, to continue on, “under the law.”

Jun 3

Rewarded According to Works

There are a number of places in scripture that SEEM to say we are, “rewarded according to works.” But isn’t that contrary to grace? Does God save us solely, “by grace through faith,” only to then put us under another law – a law of earning rewards?

Let’s realize what it would mean to be rewarded according to our works: It would mean that our eternal reward is based upon -- not some of our works; not only upon our good works; but upon ALL of our works – both good and bad. Included must be, yes, outward works, but also inward thoughts, intents, and attitudes. It would mean that for every good work, our reward goes UP. For every bad work, our reward goes DOWN. Ask: How much of a reward do you think you will receive if this is the case? In addition, ask: What is a good work? And how good is good enough? And will God be so grateful to us that He will REWARD us for doing good? If we are honest, we will see that since God has given us all things freely in Christ that nothing we receive can be based on our works. That would be contrary to everything He has revealed in Christ.

A short answer to this question is found in John 6. There Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that you believe....” (John 6:29) This is a play on words. FAITH is like a work – it certainly is a choice -- it is the one, “work,” that pleases God because faith puts aside our works and rests in Christ. All that God has for man is IN Christ – and thus, it is only through faith in Him that we can receive what God has for us.

Jun 4

The Reward of the Saint

Most of us easily agree that we are not saved by works. But many believe that once we are saved, that the amount of our eternal reward is based upon our works. Yet do we realize that the Christian life that would emerge from such thinking is one that would be, “under the law?” Sure. Instead of trying to earn salvation by works we would be trying to earn our eternal reward through works. Either one is outside the Truth.

We find the key to this question in the words of Jesus. He said, “He that would save His life will lose it, but he that loses his life for My sake will find it. (see Matt. 16:24) What is included in this LIFE that we ought to lose? Everything – including any question of reward. In fact, we could rightly substitute the word REWARD in Jesus’ statement in place of the word LIFE – and be absolutely correct in doing so, for LIFE includes any thought of reward. In that case it would read, “He that would try to save his reward will lose it, but he that loses his reward for My sake will find it.” This is, in fact, the principle of Truth that governs everything having to do with this thought of reward.

God has freely given us all things in Christ. Indeed, Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” It is God’s will that we do good works. But if we love Him, we will do them without any strings attached – we will leave any rewards to God. That is what it means to LOSE your life for Christ’s sake. And it is what it means to FREELY GIVE.

Jun 5

Revealed By Fire

Now if any man build upon this foundation (of Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (I Cor. 3:12-14)

In the picture Paul gives, what determines the reward? What the person DID? No. The reward is based on whether what he BUILT is able to abide through the fire. You do build by DOING – by working. But when you are done building, all of the work that went into it is in the past. All that stands at that point is what you have built by what you have done. And in this picture the question is whether what you have built through your works is able to survive this fire – this determines the reward.

What is built is divided into two categories in this picture: That which is of Christ – gold, silver, and precious stone, as opposed to that which is of man (wood, hay, and stubble.) What is of Christ cannot be burned up, indeed, it is all the more purified by the fire. What is of man will be burnt up – although the person himself is still saved.

Note that the PERSON passes through the fire, not merely his works or service. Thus, this is about the materials of which WE are made. Have we been built up in Christ, or is our Christian life composed of natural materials? Is Christ formed in us? Christ is built if we lose everything that is of US; of man – then He is manifested. His life in us is the work that will survive the fire because that alone is of Christ.

Jun 6

The Free Gift of Grace

God doesn't merely give us a THING called, "grace." God gives grace in that He gives HIMSELF. Grace is really God's heart attitude towards all. There is actually no basis upon which God deals with us today except grace in His Son.

One of the greatest ironies of all is that God must bring us to the place where we can freely receive what He freely gives. Rather than make us strong, He shows us we are weak. Rather than empower us to be good, He gives us Christ whether we are good or bad. All the while most of us are trying to be righteous, God is seeking to show us that we will never be, but that Christ is our only righteousness.

God saves us solely by His grace in Jesus Christ because that is the only way in which He could save us. Indeed, God created humanity to be recipients of His grace. There was never any other basis upon which God intended to fellowship with man.

Grace is not merely a doctrine or a dispensation. Grace is God -- God has given us grace and Truth in the Person of His Son.

Jun 7

The Sovereignty of God

“The Sovereignty of God,” speaks of God’s power to put His hand on anything or anyone and to bring to pass His will. But that same sovereignty means that God can take His hand off and allow human beings to make their own choices. This is what God has done during this age -- within His sovereignty. In fact, God has ordained that within His sovereignty people be allowed to reject Him.

A weak God would have to make sure things come out His way. But an all-powerful, indeed, a loving God, will allow people to reject Him. He will nevertheless have His will, with them, or without them. But He will have it.

Within His sovereignty, God had to give man a free will, including the freedom to reject Him, in order for God to have what He really wants – a voluntary love and worship. To get a voluntary love God must risk a voluntary rejection.

Faith that is pre-programmed is not real faith. Love that is pre-programmed is not love. By definition, all of the values that God is seeking to build in man are voluntary. And the only way they can become voluntary is if we grow to know Him. Thus, God must take the initiative in all of these matters – not to pre-program man – but to bring light and conviction so that we may choose. We will love Him only to the extent that we see His love for us. (I John 4:19)

What God is doing is an amazing thing. He is bringing humanity, through Christ, back to the original design and relationship of a voluntary love and fellowship.

Jun 8

By the Grace of God

Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." (I Cor. 15:10) In other words, except for the grace of God, Paul would be NOTHING. Can we see that right in this short statement, Paul states what is repeated throughout the NT: All that is of value in a Christian is of Christ -- received from above? Sure. If you are born from above, you have life from above -- Christ within you. And IN CHRIST is all that God has to give; that is of any value whatsoever. Thus, anything we have and anything we are -- that is of value to God -- He has given it in Christ. We did not contribute anything from out of our old man in Adam. Paul also said, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5) A reprobate is useless. For the believer, all that is of value is in the Christ who has come to dwell in us.

All that is of value is found in Christ, and this is NOT simply because we are saved sinners. It would be true if we never sinned -- it was true for Adam. True Christianity is not about who I am or what I have to offer God. It is about who HE IS and what He has done for me. This is a foundational Truth that today has given way to so much teaching about ME, MYSELF, and I. No. Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ." (Gal. 2:20)

Jun 9

Born of the Flesh

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. (John 3:6)

In the final analysis, we are all made of the same flesh – that which belongs to the old creation in Adam. Built into that nature is the same potential for sin. But because each of us are born into a different family, into a different environment, and exposed to different situations – with differing temperaments -- we each develop our flesh uniquely. Our personal choices mold and shape our flesh, but in the end, it IS flesh. We each have a unique version of the SAME fallen man or flesh nature. And this is all we can ever have and ever be, as to nature, if left to ourselves.

There are those who are born into a terrible family. They are abused. Perhaps they have a difficult gene pool. Maybe they are born with a strong tendency towards this or that manifestation of the flesh. Others have willfully indulged themselves in those tendencies – they know it is wrong. But the question is NOT whether our, “version,” of the flesh is worse than another. Nor is the question HOW we got there. The question is what we are going to do about it. No matter what damage life has dealt us, and no matter how unfair it is, and no matter how much to blame we are for what ails us, the solution is the same: The renunciation of the old life and the new birth in Jesus Christ.

One of most lame excuses today is that I am the way I am because I was born that way – leading to the conclusion that I should just accept it and indulge myself. No. We are all, “born that way,” in the sense that we are all born with a sin nature and have some version of the flesh. All of us need to be BORN AGAIN. None are excluded.

Jun 10

The Nature of Love

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. (I John 4:19-20)

We do not make ourselves disciples – “a taught one” – by loving others. Rather, if we are a disciples – someone who has learned Jesus Christ – we are going to want to love others. We can even love someone with God’s love without liking them – we need to put our personal reactions aside – love means we want God’s best for them. The flow of love is first down from God, into our hearts, and then out to others.

The very nature of receiving the love of God is that we will desire that others likewise receive His love, grace, and Truth. If God desires all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth (I Tim. 2:4), then His love in us will desire the same. This will do away completely with any attitude of exclusivity – God has chosen me rather than chosen you; I am better than you; I am holding the love of God to myself, etc. – that is not the Truth, and neither is it ever the nature of love. The love of God is redemptive in nature. It is a commitment to God’s highest for all.

Jun 11

Legalism, License, or Liberty

You will often hear that life in Christ is a balance between legalism and license. This is patently false. The Truth is outside of both. Life in Christ is not defined by whether or not you must keep rules. Life in Christ is exactly what the phrase suggests: It is LIFE. But most folks are blind to the fact that Christ is in us, and that He is to be our life – that is, that we are to live from out of Him by faith. And frankly, if I am blind to that I can practice either legalism or license until I am blue in the face and it will avail me absolutely nothing.

Paul said exactly that: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” Circumcision was the OT sign that you belonged to God – saved under the Old Covenant. Thus, in Paul’s time, it represented whether you were under the law. You will note that not only does Paul say the circumcision avails nothing, but he says the same thing about uncircumcision. There are lots of folks around who define their Christianity by they they DON’T do. They may not live in blatant license, but they are, in fact, under the law – they are under the law of having no law. The point is, it really doesn’t matter what false gospel we are under – we are living by the means of our own natural strength. Regardless, the solution is the same – a new creation in Christ – Christ must BE our life and our means for living.

Christianity is not a, “life-style,” patterned after the teachings of Jesus. Neither can you solve this problem by sorting out theology. No. We will never have a clue as to how to live by the means of Christ as our life until we come to the end of our own means and own life. We must see and embrace the fact that there is no good in us – and take up the Cross. Then we will begin to, “win Christ, and be found in Him,” (Phil. 3:8-9), not having a righteousness of our own, but begin to learn what it means to have Christ as our life and our righteousness. It is neither legalism or license, but liberty.

Jun 12

The Power in Preaching

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor 2:4-5)

Picture Paul, rather weak and trembling, standing before the Corinthians speaking to them the Truth of Jesus Christ. Paul was not faking this to appear humble. Neither was this a style Paul adopted so that God could be powerful through him. No. This was real. Paul WAS weak, and he looked and sounded weak. But this did not weaken God.

The power of God is not found in the words used. It is not increased by any emotionalism – or the lack thereof. Neither is it increased by brain power. God doesn’t need our marketing techniques. The Truth is the Truth, and the gospel of Truth is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe.

Jun 13

The Power of God Unto Salvation

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. (Rom 1:16)

Why is there so little power today? Because the Truth of Jesus Christ – the entire revelation of which is the gospel – is not preached. Why are there so few miracles today? Many are claimed, but most are an illusion. There are few miracles today because Christ is the power of God and you almost never hear about Christ as the power of God. Instead, we are told that the power of God is in some anointing that floats around in the air.

Today, people have come up with gimmicks to convert people and to grow churches. We have, “the seeker friendly,” “churches, and, “the purpose driven, “ movement, and a list of preachers who tell folks that they want to hear. There are also those who use fear and condemnation to try to stampede people to the altar. But read the Bible. Peter gave the first sermon in Acts 2 to the same mob that crucified Christ seven weeks prior – and three thousand people received Christ. This was not because Peter was persuasive or stirred their emotions. It wasn’t because He had come up with a new idea on how to spur church growth. It was because the power of God is in the Truth of Christ. Peter preached Christ.

The Truth of Jesus Christ is more than a message – it is a revelation of Christ that carries the convicting power of God – and can work through one in whom Christ dwells. That power is not of us. It is in the One whom dwells in us and whom we must preach.

Jun 14

Living From Out of Faith

For therein (the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Rom 1:17)

The words in the original language here are much more profound than the English translation. Paul actually says, “The just shall live from OUT OF faith.” Of course, this is the same thing as saying, “The just shall live from OUT OF Christ, by faith.”

What does that mean? It will only make sense if we realize that Christianity is CHRIST IN US – that Jesus Christ has joined us to Himself in resurrection union. This means that CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. Thus, “to live from out of Christ by faith,” means to draw from Christ His life for all that I need and all that I am. His life is resurrection life, which is life that has conquered all – and thus, the implications of drawing from Christ are immense.

I will never draw from Christ by faith if I am still clinging to and trying to hold onto MY life. This is why we must pick up our Cross if we want to follow Christ in the life of faith.

Jun 15

What Really Matters

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Gal 6:15)

During Paul's time, there was a contention as to whether converts to Christ ought to be circumcised. Under the Old Covenant, circumcision was the sign that you belonged to God. Paul often used circumcision to represent the works of man – anything we could do to the flesh or in the flesh that would supposedly show we belong to Christ.

We must read this verse with that in mind. It does not matter what you do, or what you refuse to do. It doesn't matter to whom you belong, or refuse to belong. None of that can cure what ails you or gender in you the life of Christ. Neither avails anything because in the end you must be born from above. You must lose all of that as part of losing your life for Jesus' sake and become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In Philippians 3, Paul tells us that he had to lose his self-righteousness. This is certainly what this is getting at in this verse – it is deception to think I am being made righteous by what I do or don't do. I must renounce all of that through the Cross, and become a new creature. A new creature in Christ is a person who has no righteousness of his own – but Jesus Christ is his righteousness. This was the real cure for the false gospel that had bewitched the Galatians.

Jun 16

Reverence vs. Being Afraid

“The fear of the Lord,” as stated in the Bible, is never, “being afraid of the Lord.” No, being afraid of God is the wrong kind of fear of God. The true, “fear of the Lord,” is a REVERENCE of God.

All of the wrong kind of fear of God goes back to somewhere that I have embraced a lie about Him. The Truth about God is, “God is love.” Furthermore, “there is no fear in love.” (1 Jn. 4:18) So there can be nothing about God that could make us afraid. Indeed, perfect love casts OUT fear – and so that means that the presence of God, knowing God, and believing God will cast out fear – rather than bring into us the wrong kind of fear. If I know God in Truth, I will revere Him, but will never be afraid of Him.

Paul wrote, “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim 1:7) Fear is not merely an emotion – although it can affect our emotions. Fear is a spirit – a spirit that is of the kingdom of darkness. The first impact upon Adam of his sin and alienation from God was fear – he was afraid and hid from God. Being afraid of God makes us want to hide from Him. But reverence for God makes us want to draw near to Him. Paul is saying that the spirit of fear is never from God. Thus, if I am afraid of God, I believe a lie about Him, or I have let in the spirit of fear.

Jun 17

The Testimony of Jesus

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev 19:10)

The testimony of Jesus is evidence of Jesus – it is the manifestation of Him. We are told that the saints have the testimony of Jesus. This means much more than having a story to tell about Him. “Christ in us,” is that testimony – provided that He has come to be manifested in us and through us. If Christ is being formed in us, and being manifested through us, He is our testimony. And we are His living witnesses.

This tells us what Jesus meant when He said, “But you shall receive power, because the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me.” (Acts 1:8) A witness unto Christ is one who IS a true testimony to Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit – to form Christ in us so that we might be living epistles – people who ARE evidence to the Risen Christ.

It also says here that, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” – not prophecy in the sense of foretelling the future -- but prophecy in the sense of proclaiming the Truth. A life of a saint is supposed to be DEFINED by their devotion to, dedication to, and their dependence upon Jesus Christ. The spirit of prophecy is a proclamation – through such a life of faith – of the Truth of Jesus Christ.

Jun 18

Living Epistles

You are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. (2 Cor. 3:1-3)

What is the testimony that God is writing in and through us? Is it a testimony about US -- or about all WE have done for God? No. A living epistle of Christ is about HIM – and all HE has done for us.

The Spirit of God is writing living epistles – that tell the Truth About Jesus Christ. But in order for this to be genuine, that living epistle must be MADE TRUE TO GOD. This is just another way of saying that we must be changed by the Truth so that we can be evidence of Jesus Christ without the corruption of our own bias, agenda, or flesh.

God writes living epistles through the work of the Cross. The result are people who are, “always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal bodies.” (II Cor. 4:10) That is how God writes His living epistles. The result is a life that give evidence to who Jesus Christ is TO a person, and IN a person – living epistles who are living witnesses to Him.

Jun 19

The Evidence of God

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God that he has testified of his Son. He that believes on the Son of God **has the witness in himself...and this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John 5:9-11)**

In this passage, the words, “witness,” “testified,” and, “record,” are all from the same Greek word. We could replace each of them with the word EVIDENCE.

Some skeptics demand evidence that Jesus was God and rose from the dead, but God answers them with silence. Have you ever wondered about that? Well, God has a secret – He wants to form the evidence of Christ IN HIS PEOPLE. Jesus Christ IN US is the evidence of God, and if He is formed in us, then we will become His living witnesses of that evidence.

Paul says this directly. He says, “If Christ is in you through faith then you have the evidence of God IN YOU. The evidence of God is CHRIST IN YOU.”

Jun 20

Overcoming by the Blood

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Rev 12:11)

These are not three methods by which we overcome. They are all the same Truth. They all point to the fact that we overcome, not by fighting Satan, but by coming under the One in Whom is all victory, Jesus Christ. The key to all victory in the Christian life is the losing of my life for Jesus’ sake in order to find Him as my life.

Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Mat 16:24-25) This verse from Revelation is this same Truth. Victory is HIS resurrection life. I have to lose mine in order to find HIS.

This verse tells us that overcoming must be based upon the foundation of the Cross; the Blood of the Lamb. This is not a matter of merely believing the doctrine – rather, it is a matter of picking up my cross daily. The access point of Satan is natural man, and the Cross crucifies natural man, completely disarming Satan. “The word of testimony,” in the saint is CHRIST IN US – which is resurrection life. If we lose our lives by picking up the cross daily, there comes a greater release of His life in us -- a living testimony in us of His Son. Against such Satan has no power. Finally, we see the necessity of abandonment to God. If I ask God to do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ, and then believe and obey when He does, I am standing upon the One in whom there is already the eternal victory. I have overcome through faith in Christ.

Jun 21

His Victorious Life

Jesus Christ has finished every victory that will ever need to be won for humanity. This finished victory, however, is not given to us as a THING. It is not merely a legal document. No. The finished victory is the risen Jesus Christ Himself, that is, all victory is found IN HIM – it is HIS LIFE. And He is IN US.

God has given us all things freely IN Jesus Christ. Notice: IN Christ. God has not given us things BECAUSE of Christ – as things apart from Christ. No. God has given us Christ Himself. And all that God has to give is IN the Person of Christ -- fundamental to which is HIS resurrection life: “I am the resurrection and the life.” (Jn. 11:25)

How has God given us life in Christ? By making us One with Him. At salvation, Jesus Christ joined us to Himself – making us one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) Thus, if Christ is in us, His resurrection life is in us -- all that is in Christ is in us, freely by His grace.

But this does not obliterate our natural man. Rather, it creates a separation between that natural man and our union with Christ. This is the separation of soul from Spirit. It likewise creates the need for the work of the Cross upon our natural man. We must lose our lives under the work of the Cross, so that His resurrection life in us might be formed and released.

So what is the Christian life? What is the overcoming life? The Christian life IS the overcoming life -- because the Christian life is His resurrection life in us. As we lose our old life, Christ is formed within us (Gal. 4:19). The life we find is His resurrection life in which there is all victory.

ALL resurrection life is found in Christ, and if we are joined to Him, that resurrection life is already given to us IN HIM. The necessity of the work of the Cross, and the finding of His life, are not added to Christ. Rather, they are the result of His life in us.

Jun 22

Jesus Christ is Victory

For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

New life in Christ is victorious by nature – it is life that was raised out of death, having conquered it. A person in whom Christ dwells has His life in them. Thus, if we are in Christ, we have victory over death IN HIM – over all that is earthly. This is why to overcome, we need NOT to fight death or the earthly. No. We need to forsake it – by losing our lives to Christ. Victory is never the result of turning in on ourselves and fighting sin – indeed, this could be unbelief. Rather, victory is a matter of abandoning myself to God and, by faith, losing myself fully into the hands of the Victor.

Jun 23

Victory Through Surrender

But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)

Once we receive Christ as Savior and He joins us to Himself, we are united with Him in both in His death and resurrection. (Rom. 6:4-5) Our resurrection union with Him is the basis for all victory. For through His resurrection, He has destroyed the last enemy – death. Thus, it is in HIS LIFE that His victory is finished for us.

Christ is in us, through the joining of our spirit to His spirit. (1 Cor. 6:17) This resurrection union is the new creature in Christ. But if we were to draw an imaginary circle around this new creature, all that is outside of that circle would be our natural man. This distinction is the separation between soul and Spirit within each believer. But it is also the separation between victory IN CHRIST – which resides in our union with Him – and our natural man in which there is no victory.

Here is see why we must LOSE our lives – hand over our natural man to the Cross – in order to experience the victory Jesus has won. Victory in Christ is not handed to us as a THING – merely because we say we believe. No. We must become one with Him in His death in order to be raised with Him in His life. You must LOSE your life in order to find His life -- and the victory that is found in His resurrected life. The potential for this is already in each saint. But in order to experience it, we must pick up the Cross.

We need not win any victory. Rather, we must abandon the life in which there is no victory. For us, victory comes through surrender to Jesus – surrender to the Victor.

Jun 24

Normal vs. Abnormal

Before we see Christ, we know only darkness. Imagine being born into a race of beings that are naturally blind. You would not even know you are blind, because you would not know what it is to see. Blindness would be all you have ever known – and because you are the same as everyone else – to you -- blindness would be NORMAL.

Look around you at your fellow man. Look at the world. Is this NORMAL? To most people it is. And yet, in the eyes of God, fallen man is absolutely ABNORMAL. Thus, what is NORMAL to us, is ABNORMAL to God. And what is NORMAL to God, is ABNORMAL to us.

Jesus is God's NORMAL – the light of God. And when we begin to know Him, all that is ABNORMAL begins to be exposed because we see it in the Light of Christ. This is why we often do not understand God. We are for the first time seeing the NORMAL. Our eyes are being opened: “Unless you are born again you cannot SEE.” (Jn. 3:3) Seeing Jesus means seeing He who is from above (Jn. 8:23) – God's true normal.

Jun 25

Seeing Jesus Christ

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14)

Natural man cannot receive the things of God – he has no frame of reference -- because natural man, left to himself, does not know Jesus Christ. Natural man will instead accept as the Truth whatever his makeup tells him is the Truth.

Natural man will create God in the image of natural man. If I do not allow God to adjust me to fit Christ -- or don't know to do that -- then I am going to adjust all things to fit myself. This is why there are so many people, including many professing Christians, who believe some of the most blatant errors. There is something in their makeup to which error appeals – either in a positive way or a negative way. The error makes sense to them. It seems to help them. It makes them feel good. So they accept it as the Truth. This is total deception because it is man using himself as the basis to determine the Truth. This is not a matter of brains – but of spiritual darkness.

If natural man cannot see or receive the things of God, then it stands to reason that in order to see you must be born from above – which is exactly what Jesus said. (see John 3:3) There is no value in two blind folks arguing over what they see – neither can see. Until we are born from above – and begin to see Jesus – we can see nothing else. Discernment is the result of knowing Jesus Christ, and thus, seeing the Truth about all else in the light of Him.

Jun 26

What is the Mind of Christ?

But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:10, 16)

Assuming we have a single eye to God and embrace the Truth, the result of the Spirit of Christ revealing to us the Truth is that we will, “have the mind of Christ.” Sure. The purpose of the Spirit of God is to form Christ in us, and if Christ is being formed in us, surely His mind is being formed in us.

But what is, “the mind of Christ?” It is not the brainpower of Christ. No. It is both the perspective of Christ and the intent of Christ. The mind of Christ is the result of Christ being formed in us – as Christ is formed in us, and we grow to know Him, we gain His perspective and have His intent – His mind is formed in us.

The mind of Christ knows the Truth. However, knowing the Truth requires that you be made true unto God. In other words, to know the Truth we must repent of all untruth that is in our hearts. The mind of Christ is based in a heart that is made true to God.

Jun 27

Enticement to Sin

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. (James 1:13-15)

The picture here is one of bait in a trap. A creature is not attracted to the bait unless the bait appeals to it in some way. Likewise, the reason we sin is that the bait is able to entice some unresolved sin or ignorance that is in our heart. People sin, and are deceived, because they are attracted to bait that appeals to their natural makeup.

Bait can appeal to us in a positive way by offering us food that seems to please our natural religious makeup. Maybe the bait is that we will be closer to God. Maybe it will offer us a path that makes us feel good, or enhances our self-worth. But bait can also appeal to people in a negative way. Many people are attracted to bait because they are afraid of what will happen if they don't take the bait. But whatever the methods of the enemy, the reason for taking the bait is found in US – sin and error appeals to our natural, religious nature. The only solution is to open ourselves to Jesus Christ so that He can expose those areas of vulnerability and reveal to us the Truth.

Why does God allow such temptation? Well, first of all, it is not a matter of whether we have wrong desires or motives in our makeup. Rather, it is a matter of what kind. Thus, when we encounter bait, the potential for sin is not being created, but rather brought out. Can we see that this is God's way of exposing us so that we can be set free? That this is God using a temptation to expose our great need for Christ?

This is how God uses Satan. He allows Satan to tempt us on our weak points, so that we might see we are weak and rely upon Christ by faith. Thus, this is one way God turns our weak points into places of strength in Christ. This will, of course, not happen if we continue on a path of darkness and refuse to turn. But it is God's purpose in allowing temptation, because God is a redemptive God.

Jun 28

Temptation vs. Sin

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. (James 1:14-15)

Temptation TO sin is not sin. A person can be under great temptation but yet NOT sin. Jesus underwent great temptation in the wilderness and all through His life – He was tempted in all points, yet without sin.

Temptation to sin can be turned into a positive because it not only exposes our weakness, but is an opportunity to turn to Jesus Christ as our victory.

Jun 29

Fake Faith

Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor 10:12)

Paul is not exhorting us to make sure we are strong enough to stand. Rather, he is telling us to make sure that our faith is in Jesus Christ -- rather than in ourselves, or in something else. If your faith is in yourself, you may for a time think you stand. But your faith is NOT real. It is fake; a façade. The only real faith is faith in Jesus Christ, because He is the only One who is faithful and true.

God is faithful. Therefore, if our faith is fake – not in Christ – God will be faithful to expose us. He will let the crisis come – and the storm will topple our façade. This might seem terrible, but it is God’s faithfulness to show us the Truth. It is the only way in which we can build faith anew upon the solid Rock.

The trial of faith is like gold tried by fire. (1 Peter 1:7) When gold is tried by fire, all of the impurities come to the surface and can be discarded. What remains is a purer gold. In like manner, if our faith is fake, or not pure, God will let a crisis come that is beyond what that fake or impure fake can bear. It will collapse. But God is showing us the Truth so that we can stop putting fake faith in ourselves and begin putting it in His Son.

Jun 30

The Way of Escape

There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor 10:13)

What is the purpose of, “the way of escape,” within a trial of faith? We might assume that this way of escape is a way to get out of the trial. But this is not what the verse says. It says that the way of escape is so that, “we may be able to BEAR IT.” Does that sound like the way of escape get us out of the trial? No. This is an escape from the effects of the trial -- while we remain IN IT. God will always make THAT possible.

Jesus Christ – our life in Him by faith – is the way of escape. God does not remove the trial from us. Rather, He removes us from the trial – not circumstantially – but by revealing to us His Son in a way that enables us to live in Christ by faith above the trial – so that we might be able to bear it without ill effects to our faith. In short, we ESCAPE the work of the enemy in a trial through the resurrection life of Christ.

Is this not what it means to, “overcome?” We don’t overcome in Christ by avoiding trouble. Neither do we overcome by defeating the trouble. We overcome by, “coming under,” i.e., entering into the death of Christ by losing ourselves to Him. And we escape the death that is in the trial by the resurrection life that is in Him. This happens while we remain in the trial and despite it. In short, we don’t get OUT of the trial – He comes IN.

Jul 1

The Power of His Resurrection

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil 3:10-11)

What is the power of His resurrection? It is the power of His Life over death. And the fact is, He is our life. His resurrection life in us is a life that has already conquered all death. That is why, in order to overcome and be in His victory, we have to be living from His life. But in order to be living from HIS life – we have to lose our life.

How does a person have power over death? From where do we get power over sin? By developing a religious system based on Bible principles? By law keeping? By plugging into the right church, group, or accountability system? No. The power over death and over sin is found in HIM – in His resurrection life.

We must see the Truth that Jesus Christ in us is THE LIFE – He is our life. This isn't merely a poetic way of saying we are saved. No. Jesus Christ IS the power of God – the living Jesus Christ who dwells in us NOW. Thus, we must learn to live, by faith, from OUT OF HIM as our life. But this cannot happen unless we are, "made conformable to His death." His life comes only through our death – we must lose our lives in order to find HIS. Only then can we live in the power of His resurrection.

Jul 2

The Essential of True Doctrine

We must believe, stand for, and preach, only true doctrine. But why? What makes doctrine true? The easy answer is that the Bible makes it true, that is, if doctrine is taught in the Bible, then it is true doctrine. Good. But then we might ask, "What makes doctrine that is taught in the Bible true?"

True Bible doctrine came out of the Truth Himself. He breathed it. God gave the Bible as a written revelation of Himself. Therefore, true doctrine IS true doctrine because it tells the Truth about God – right from the heart of God Himself.

Of course, God also wants to reveal Himself to us through Christ in an INWARD way – He wants to reveal to us the Truth by His Spirit. But since there is only ONE Truth, what God reveals to us about Jesus Christ through His Spirit is always going to agree one hundred percent with what He has revealed in His written Word.

If true doctrine tells the Truth about God, then false doctrine lies about Him. Whatever I say the Bible teaches I am saying about the God who breathed it. Whatever I say God has revealed, I am saying about the God who revealed it. This is why holding to true doctrine is absolutely essential: I am describing God Himself – His plan and purpose through Christ. I am teaching others about Him.

Jul 3

There Must Be Heresies

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are genuine may be made manifest among you. (1 Cor. 11:19)

God never creates or is pleased with heresy – for heresy is a lie about God. Paul is simply saying that there are going to be heresies, and that God must allow them. Why does God allow heresy, heretics, and false teaching in His church?

He tells us: In order that the genuine article might be proven or built. For example, how do you know two plus two equals four? Probably because you were taught that it does -- and you accepted it. But if someone comes along claiming that two plus two equals five, now you are going to have to prove two plus two equals four. Because you are faced with error, you must prove the truth – and if you do, your knowledge and faith that two plus two equals four will be strengthened. Being faced with error was therefore an opportunity to prove the Truth.

When a person who believes the Truth is faced with error – or when a person who believes error is faced with the Truth – they have a choice. Do we want to know Jesus Christ? If so, God will give us more than information. He will give us revelation. He will not only expose any error we believe, but He will expose the unbelief that is in our hearts that gave place for it. We will be made genuine – made true unto God. And if we already believed the Truth, our faith will be strengthened all the more because the Truth upon which it is built will be proven all the more. There must be heresies – they are allowed by God so that we might be given cause to seek the Truth in Christ.

Jul 4

True Revival

The term, “revival,” means, “to come alive again.” But that suggests that there was once life, which died, but now must be revived. Having said that, what is REVIVAL? Revival is the bringing in of Jesus Christ -- as the Life. (John 14:6) During a real revival, Christ becomes OUR life, and thus, we become alive in Him.

True revival is first judgment. If God is to reveal Christ, then all that is contrary to Christ must be exposed and renounced. Jesus isn't going to simply show up and affirm what we have been doing. Repentance, and a forsaking of all that has hindered Christ, will always be at the forefront of any revival.

Then – real revival is a revelation of Jesus Christ to people in a personal, inward way. CHRIST IN YOU becomes real. Of course, we tend to think of revival as a big special event – as something God does once in awhile. In fact, we should not need a revival. If the Truth of Jesus Christ is being preached in season and out of season, people should be continually edified unto the forming of Christ in them.

Jul 5

False Revival

For false revival to deceive, it has to look like true revival. It is a terrifying and yet ironic thing that the end time apostasy is going to look like a great end time revival. The Bible never promises an end time revival. But there is plenty about an end time apostasy.

Since God is not in a false revival, there must be a substitute that will look like God is in it. That substitute is usually signs and wonders – people getting all worked up because they believe God has done something TO them. No. The fact is, signs and wonders are never evidence of true revival. God doesn't merely want to do something TO us – He wants to reveal Jesus Christ IN US.

There is an old saying, "Things always grow up to be what they really are." Look at the long term fruit of a revival and that will tell you whether it was of God. The question is this: Has Jesus Christ been revealed IN people as the outcome? Using this as our guide, we would be hard pressed to find many revivals of the 20th century that could pass the test. Most of the eventual outcome of these revivals have been to minimize Jesus Christ in favor of something else that is a substitute for Him.

Jul 6

Signs and Wonders

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah." (Mat 12:39)

People most often seek after signs and wonders because they do not believe and trust God – they are always needing God to prove Himself to them. In fact, Jesus says that this can be spiritual adultery – people put faith in experiences through signs and wonders rather than in Christ Himself. They want things from God but not God Himself.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were waiting for the Messiah. They knew all of the Bible verses that spoke of Him. They continually prayed that God would send Him. But when He stood right in their midst they called Him a devil. They did not recognize Him – despite the fact that He did many signs and wonders in front of them. Did those miracles change them? No. The problem was that they did not want God or want the Truth. They wanted a Messiah who would affirm their religion, affirm them, and exclude everyone else. We can be guilty of the same unbelief.

There are a number of ways to seek signs and wonders – this is not limited to seeking some fantastic miracle. I could continually nag God to prove to me He is there in any number of ways. But if Christ is being formed within me, and I have a growing inward knowledge of Him, He will be all the evidence that I need. If I am raised in Christ, then the sign of Jonah – resurrection -- is the only evidence I will need from God.

Jul 7

True Prophecy from a False Prophet

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder comes to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; You shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 13:1-3)

The most obvious mark of a false prophet is that what he says does not come true. Yet here we see the possibility that what he says DOES come true – and that the sign or wonder he does is REAL. But we are being told that NONE of this proves that the person is speaking for God.

The evidence of a true prophet is that he not only teaches the Truth – but that He gets you into a personal relationship with the Truth Himself. That is the purpose of all true ministry. It is what the Holy Spirit does. Thus, it does not matter what miracles a person might work, all that matters is that there is of EDIFICATION IN CHRIST.

Note that God allows such deceptions to PROVE US. I Cor. 11:19 says the same thing: “There must be heresies among you so that those of you who are genuine might be made manifest.” When we are faced with errors and lies they will always present us with a choice. The choice is whether we want Jesus Christ. God allows heresy so that in seeking Him for the Truth we might have our faith strengthened and hearts purified.

Jul 8

Faith Without Works

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:26)

James believed the same gospel as did Paul. But in his epistle, he is dealing with those who would practice license.

James is NOT saying that real faith, if it has not works, will die, and that I will lose my salvation. No. Rather, he is saying that faith without works is NOT GENUINE faith to begin with. Is DEAD faith a real faith? No. Dead faith is not the outcome of abiding the the Living Vine. Thus, it is not, “connected,” to Christ; it is dead. It is fake faith. If my faith is merely intellectual, or emotional, or in myself, ultimately it will prove to be dead. Real faith and rest in Jesus Christ is living. It always produces at least the desire to do God’s will. Thus, if I don’t have that desire, there is a serious question about my faith.

All good works in the Christian life – “good works,” as God defines them – are the outcome of being rightly related to God by faith – through Christ. If I am rightly related to God by faith, I will at least desire to obey Him. If I am not rightly related to Him by faith, then I have a fake faith – a dead faith. My works will eventually reflect it.

Jul 9

Works Without Faith

How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:14)

Just as, “faith without works,” is dead, so is, “works without faith.” dead. In a nutshell, “faith without works,” is license. But, “works without faith,” is legalism.

Works without faith is dead because, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Gal 5:4) All good works in the Christian life are to be the outcome of being rightly related to Christ by faith. It is to be, “by grace, through faith...UNTO good works.” (see Eph. 2:8-10) If I don’t have faith, I am not rightly related to Christ – I might as well be separated from Him – and all the works that emerge, because they are not of faith, they are not of Christ, and are thus DEAD.

These matters of faith and works, or law vs. grace, are not merely theological matters. You can be a professor of theology majoring in law and grace and have no faith in Christ. Or you could be someone who knows very little theology and yet have great faith in Christ, living fully in His grace. This is about Truth – and what constitutes a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jul 10

The Law is Not of Faith

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but, “The man that does them shall live in them.” (Gal. 3:11-12)

Note the sentence: “The law is not of faith.” It could read, “The ability to keep God’s law and be justified thereby is not the outcome of faith.” There have always been those who have taught that faith in Christ gives us the power to keep God’s law – and that this is HOW we are then justified. Indeed, I have heard GRACE wrongly defined as, “The desire and power to do God’s will.” But hidden within this error is really justification by works: For if faith enables us to be justified by works then faith is nothing more than the means by which we become justified by works. This is not the Truth.

Faith -- rather than enable us to keep God’s law and thus be justified by works -- is the means by which we are justified BY CHRIST HIMSELF – completely independent of our works. Yes, all good works in the Christian life are supposed to be the outcome of real faith – but this does not mean that those works justify us. No. We are solely justified by faith in Christ. Good works are the outcome – not the means unto justification – and not a means to complete our justification. Again – “the law is not OF faith,” but rather, “justification in Christ is solely by faith.” This is a world of difference. But we will never grasp that difference unless we know what it means to be born again.

Jul 11

When the Comforter Comes

Christianity at the core is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) Christ dwells in a saint by the means of the Spirit of God, or, “the Comforter.” The work of the Spirit will be to, “form Christ in us” – that is, bring us into an inward realization of Christ. And the forming of Christ in us will be unto the forming of the believer together WITH Christ. (Rom. 8:29) If this happens, we will BE His witnesses. (Acts 1:8) These things constitute the purpose of God for this age – it is why the Comforter was given.

In John, chapters 14 thru 16, Jesus affirmed these things as the work of the Comforter. In summary, the work of the Comforter is to reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us. Likewise, Paul would teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be to edify believers in CHRIST. (Eph. 4:12-16) And his travail for the churches was that, through the Spirit, “CHRIST might be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) Indeed, Jesus even went out of His way to point out that the work of the Holy Spirit would never be about the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” (see John 16:13) Note that: The Holy Spirit will guide us into all Truth, but will never do this by turning attention to the Holy Spirit – but rather do so by the revelation of the Person of Christ in each believer.

All that being said, then why do we have movements centered upon the Holy Spirit? Would the Holy Spirit be in a movement that is centered on the Holy Spirit? If you examine most of the movements that are centered upon the Holy Spirit, or the baptism with the Holy Spirit, you generally do not find the work of the Holy Spirit, which is the revelation of Christ IN US. The reality of, “CHRIST IN US,” is an almost completely unknown Truth in the vast majority of churches today. You rarely even hear the words. Yet CHRIST IN US is the essence of Christianity – which is why the revelation of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit!

Paul prayed, “I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” (Eph. 1:16) The desire of Paul, inspired to be recorded in scripture, is the desire of God. Indeed, it is the purpose for which the Comforter came: To reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us.

When we were saved, Jesus joined us to Himself by making us one with His Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:17) Thus, Christ is in us through the Holy Spirit. His Spirit carries all that is of Christ – which is the fullness of God. And if Christ is in us, then we are complete in Him – God has given us all things freely in His Son. So, if Christ is in us, what could we possibly LACK? Nothing. Herein we see the danger: Once Christ is not enough, or once Christ is not the purpose of the Comforter, then substitutes will be brought in. Christ will be replaced by signs, wonders, movements, and experiences. And over the course of time, you will no longer have a Christianity that is CHRIST IN US – but a false gospel that is about almost anything or anyone else. Yet God’s purpose remains – to guide us into all Truth – to form us together with Christ that we might BE His witnesses.

Jul 12

Obedience to the Faith

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. (Rom 1:5)

All good works in the Christian life are supposed to be the product of being freely justified through faith in Christ. But what are, “good works?” Even unbelievers can do, “good works.” People who are trying to be justified by their works do, “good works.” In short, it is possible to do, “good works,” not from out of faith, but from out of unbelief. It is possible to, “obey God” – not because I believe Him – but because I don’t.

“Obedience to the faith,” means I do good works because I believe. My faith is solely in Christ, and I know I am justified freely by His grace. It is finished, and I am settled about it. So I do good works because I LOVE GOD. Contrast this over and against doing good works as the means of keeping right with God. In that case, I might do outwardly good works – but not because my faith is in Christ and I belong to Him – but because I am still trying to keep myself right with God by those good works.

What are, “good works,” as God defines them? They are the works that constitute, “obedience to the faith,” i.e., they are the works that spring from seeing THE TRUTH. They have nothing to do with keeping myself right with God – but I do them because I am right with Him by grace – and I do them because I love God. You cannot fake that. You either see the Truth of grace and believe, or you don’t. And if you see it, you will walk in, “obedience to the faith.”

Jul 13

The Righteousness of God Manifested

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. (Rom 3:21-22)

Verses like this one are so familiar, it is easy to embrace them as merely doctrine, and forget that they speak of Truth that forms the basis of new life. Righteousness is a matter of being right, not only WITH God, but FOR God. That necessitates a LIFE – a new creature in whom there is a righteousness that can fellowship with God. Such life is found only in Christ.

Thus, we need more than a righteousness that is legally imputed to us. Rather, we need a righteous life to be IMPARTED to us. When we are raised in Christ – God imparts to us Christ Himself. Christianity IS Christ in us, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27) Christ IS our life – our righteous life. (Col. 3:4) Christ IS our righteousness. (I Cor. 1:30) Christ in us is the reason we are justified – He is the reason we are RIGHT FOR GOD. The righteousness of God that is manifested – apart from the law – is Christ Himself in the believer.

Jul 14

Abiding in the Vine

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. (John 15:4)

“To abide,” means to, “live in,” or, “to live from.” If we abide in the Vine, we are abiding in His life; living from out of Him. His life is resurrection life, which is the power over all death and sin. And note, He said, “I AM the Vine.” He is that, right now, IN US.

What this tells us is that we don’t have to obey God in order to abide in Christ. Rather, we must abide in Christ in order to obey. To put it another way, we abide in Christ through obedience to the faith. We cannot abide in Him through obedience to the law.

The question here is not one of works. It is one of LIFE. The means of obedience to God is the LIFE of Christ – we have to live out from His life that is in us. The notion that we must obey in order to keep in that life is contrary to the gospel of grace.

The picture of bearing fruit is certainly a great one. Does a branch bear fruit so that it can continue to abide in the Vine? No. The branch first abides in the Vine SO THAT it can bear fruit. Thus, fruit, including works, is the outcome of abiding in Christ by faith.

Everything of value in the Christian life, including works, fruit, and the character of Jesus Christ, is the result of abiding in Christ by faith. That is because we must first abide in Him for His LIFE to produce these results through us.

Jul 15

Full Assurance of Faith

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.) (Heb 10:22-23)

A full assurance of faith – without wavering -- is NOT possible if such a faith is based on anything about ourselves. Faith that does not waver is the result of knowing that the Person whom we trust never changes – He is always true and faithful -- and upon the fact that He alone is our basis for access to God.

Emotions waver; temperament wavers; and moods waver. But those things are all in us; of our natural makeup. Faith in God is not emotional, temperamental, or the outcome of a mood. Faith comes by hearing and embracing the Truth that God reveals – and fundamental to all Truth is Jesus Christ as The Way to God.

When Jesus said, “I Am the Way,” He was not talking only about salvation. Rather, Jesus is the means by which we are IN GOD every day for all situations. We don’t have to try to find the way to God. If we are saved, Christ is in us, and He is our Way.

Jul 16

Through the Veil

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. (Heb 10:19-20)

When Jesus died, the actual veil in the temple in Jerusalem was rent from top to bottom. This showed that the way to oneness with God was opened through Jesus Christ. No one and nothing can sew the spiritual veil back together and close our access to God.

Sins -- but more importantly -- the sin nature, is what separated us from God. This made it impossible for us to be one with God. But on the Cross, Jesus bore in His body the Adam race – the body of sin. (Rom. 6:6) When He died, the body of sin died in Him. Thus, the veil which represented His body dies -- is rent. That which separated us from God is figuratively torn from top to bottom, and the way is permanently opened into the presence of God through Christ.

Access to God is permanently opened IN Christ. Nothing can come between ourselves and God. Not even our sin – because that is what was already taken away and torn asunder by the death of Christ. Thus, if sin is between ourselves and God, WE, and not God, have put it there through unbelief. In other words, the way is open. The sin is that we will not believe and enter in solely, “by grace through faith,” in Christ.

Jul 17

A New and Living Way

The temple veil that was rent when Jesus died stood for body of sin that was rent when Jesus died. This opened up a new and living Way -- Christ in us IS The Way. Thus, we don't merely receive the legal right to enter the holiest because of Jesus. We receive Jesus Himself – He is our High Priest -- already in the presence of God.

Note the phrase, “A new and LIVING way.” The veil is rent by the death of Christ. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. But we are saved by His life (see Rom. 5:10) – we are saved because He has joined us to Himself and He IS our Life.

Jesus Christ died and opened the way into God for every human being that will ever live. That is a finished work – and would remain finished for all of us even if not one of us ever believed. But – it will do us no good if we do not believe, and come to Christ for LIFE. We must believe in order to be joined to the Lord and be saved by His life. As Paul said, “One died for all, and therefore, all were dead.” (II Cor. 5:14) But we must embrace His death by faith in order to be raised in Him unto newness of life.

The only sin that can keep us from Christ is our refusal to come to Him. This is unbelief. All other sin has already been taken away by the Lamb of God.

Jul 18

Elementary Faith

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb 11:6)

This is a description of the faith at its root: A person must believe that God exists, that is, will reveal Himself. A person must also believe that if we seek God we will find Him – the person must believe that God is a, “responder to them that seek Him out.”

You will notice that the focus is upon the faithfulness of God. But isn't it a fact that the faithfulness of God is ALWAYS the basis for our faith, and is therefore what is tried in any trial of faith? Is God really there for me? Is God indifferent to me? Will God respond to me as I seek Him? This verse proves that He will respond – in fact, at the root, faith believes that God is a responder to those who diligently seek Him.

True faith is never, “faith in my faith,” that is, it is not reliance upon my ability to believe or find God. Rather, faith is based on nothing more complicated than the faithfulness of God. God is faithful in that He will always respond to those who seek Him out – He will reveal Himself through Christ and take us on into His purposes.

Jul 19

Strangers and Pilgrims

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Heb 11:13)

THE promise of the Father is Jesus Christ. All of God's other promises, indeed, all that God has for man is wrapped up in the Person of His Son. And Christ is IN US. Thus, we are complete in Him. (Col. 2:9) But in this age it is impossible for us to experience all that we have received in Christ. That is why the Spirit of God – through which Christ dwells in us – is said to be, “the earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:14) The word, “earnest,” means, “down payment.”

It has been said that the more of Christ you experience, the more you will sense is in Him – yet to be experienced. This is the Truth wrapped up in the above verse. In this age, and in this human frame, we are not able to fully experience Christ. Thus, the saint is going to have this unsatisfied hunger for Christ. Of course. There is no end to the riches in Christ. The more we grow to know and experience Him, the more hungry He makes us for more of Him. This is the only way it really could be if we are talking about God Himself. A stranger and pilgrim will never feel at home in this age. There will be a certain restlessness about this life even as a Christian. We will always be longing for another home – something beyond here. But this is all because knowing Him makes us sense that there is so much more of Him – here we can see only from afar – as through a glass darkly. But then we will see Him face to face. (I Cor. 13:12)

Jul 20

Because of His Mercy

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

Because there is no true knowledge of God in man by nature, indeed, the carnal mind is at enmity against God, we tend to view God as One who wants to deprive us. We read verses like the one above that talk about the necessity of the work of the Cross, and we cringe. In fact, most of us tend to think of the Christian life as a rather reluctant resignation of surrender to God – something we do simply because we must.

You will note the preface of this teaching is, “I beseech you because of the MERCIES of God.” Paul is appealing to us, not, “by the wrath of God,” There is no demand here under threat of punishment. In fact, Paul says that if we really knew God, presenting ourselves to God as described would be, “our well-reasoned out choice.” In short, God is for us, and not against us, and what He commands here is for our good, our freedom, and unto His purpose in Christ.

A primary reason why we don't want to lose our lives to Christ is because we don't see our real condition. Neither do we see what it means to find Christ as our life. Paul is saying that once we begin to grasp the Truth that the well-reasoned out choice will be obvious: We will want to get on the altar and give ourselves fully to Jesus Christ.

Jul 21

True Holiness

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

Holiness means that I belong to God – and not to myself – the Greek word means, “to be set apart for God's use.” We are told multiple times in scripture that, “we are not our own; we are bought with a price.” (I Cor. 6:19) Indeed, the very word translated, “saint,” means, “holy one.” Thus, the name God Himself inspired to refer to person in Christ carries the meaning, “one who belongs, not to themselves, but to Christ.”

The above verse is built upon that Truth of holiness. Everyone can obey it by faith. In fact, rather than think of it as an act, think of it as a continual faith relationship with God. We are to get on the altar – i.e., pick up the Cross – and confess that we belong to God by asking Him to do, “whatever it takes,” to bring to pass His purpose in us. We can do this no matter who we are, or where we are in Christ.

This abandonment to God, if we mean it, equals losing our lives to Christ – and is a way to express true holiness – “present your bodies a living sacrifice, HOLY.....”

Jul 22

A Living Sacrifice

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

In the OT, no animal volunteered to be a sacrifice. But here we see that we are to, “present ourselves,” as a LIVING sacrifice. Certainly this means we must voluntarily present ourselves on the altar – i.e., pick up our Cross.

The fact is, unless we are voluntarily giving ourselves to God -- it is not really of faith. Faith is not of law – real faith isn’t the result of believing God because I am forced to believe by a law. No. Real faith is the result of believing because I KNOW. I believe because I have heard and embraced the Truth of God’s faithfulness.

Ironically, if we present ourselves a living sacrifice to God, we will be, “always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” (2 Cor 4:11) Do we still want to get on that altar? We should want to, because even though it will be death to the old, we will find true life in Christ.

You will never find any suggestion in the Bible that God is going to force surrender upon us. Coherced faith is not faith. God will take the initiative to show us the Truth – but ultimately we must choose to voluntarily, by faith, to get on the altar as a LIVING sacrifice. If nothing else, we can simply present ourselves to God by asking Him to do, “whatever it takes,” to get His purpose in Christ.

Jul 23

The Light in the Life

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice....and be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom 12:2)

Do we want to know Jesus Christ – and know His will? Most of us have this notion that in order to KNOW the will of God, we need INFORMATION – we need God to tell us facts. Certainly God is able to do that, and sometimes does. But this is not the way in which God usually reveals His will. Rather than give us INFORMATION, God wants to give us REVELATION.

Now, what does that mean: “revelation?” Revelation is not merely information about God or His will. Revelation is of Jesus Christ Himself. And if you read the above verse, revelation of Christ is found in HIS LIFE. Sure. Jesus is a Person – an individual. He is both Life and Light. If you lose your life to find His life, along with His life is going to come Light – a greater revelation of Himself. If we receive a revelation of Jesus Himself, we are going to more clearly know His will – because He will be our Light.

Jul 24

The Renewal of the Mind

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

Here we are told that in order to know the will of God, we need more than just NEW INFORMATION. Rather, we need a RENEWED MIND. We are not transformed by information – we are transformed by the renewing of our minds according to the TRUTH.

This is why when we cry out to God, “If you would only tell me what to DO!,” He is usually silent. It isn’t about DOING, it is about believing from out of a mind that has been renewed according to Christ. If you did not trust God, but now trust Him, what changed? The information you had about Him? No. YOU changed. Your mind has been renewed. You now know the Truth about Him – there has come a revelation of Christ that has renewed your mind thus enabled you to trust Him.

Faith comes to be in a person by hearing the Word God speaks or reveals. (Rom. 10:17) But if we do hear – embrace the Truth God reveals – it will renew our minds, and faith can come to be. Thus, the Truth renews our minds -- and faith can emerge -- proving the, “acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Jul 25

Suffering Without Cause

And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that *there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and escheweth evil? and still he holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause.*” (Job 2:3)

What was the purpose of the trial of Job? God’s own words prove that it was NOT because Job had sinned. In fact, God Himself says what happened to Job was, “without cause.” Of course, the fact Job was suffering, “without cause,” is the conflict of the entire book. Job was convicted of no sin. But he was suffering. Isn’t this our conflict in any trial as well? Why must we suffer if we have believed and obeyed God?

The fact that Job could suffer in the will of God – but not because he had sinned – points to the NT Truth of God’s purpose: To form Christ in us; that we might know Him. Job was not being punished – he was being chastised. “Chastisement,” means, “to train a child,” and is necessary for growth, even if we are fully in the will of God. At the end of Job’s trial, he says, “I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not....I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” This is the purpose for which God allows these things: That we may see Him and know Him. This is not punishment for sin. It is the love of our Father to reveal Himself to us.

Jul 26

Transformed by the Truth

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom. 12:2)

How are we changed, or transformed? By the renewing of our mind. How else could we see the Truth and be changed by it? But our minds are not renewed by increasing brain power through academics. Rather, we are renewed in our minds by knowing Jesus Christ.

The true knowledge of Jesus Christ might be called an inward realization of Christ. Paul said, “I travail until Christ be FORMED in you,” (Gal. 4:19) – the word, “formed,” means, “to inwardly realize or express.” Anyone can study Bible teaching and pass it on to others, but God wants us to know the One of whom the Bible teaches. In short, we are TRANSFORMED as He is FORMED in us – we are FORMED TOGETHER with Him – which is what it means to be, “conformed to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:29)

Paul says, “Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” This is simply another way of saying, “You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.” (John 8:32)

Jul 27

Yet Not I, But Christ

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

Paul knew, and taught, that Christ was crucified FOR him. But the fact that Christ is crucified FOR us made something else possible: We are crucified WITH Christ. Note that all of this is clearly in PAST tense: Christ died for us, so that we died in Christ. The reason we must pick up our Cross to follow Christ, is not because this is not finished. It is because we have to walk in the Truth of it.

Paul also says that because we are crucified WITH Christ, we are raised in Him – “nevertheless, I LIVE.” But note: We do not merely live BECAUSE of Christ. No. Christ lives IN US – that is – He IS our life. Eternal life is not a THING God gives us. No. God gives us Christ, in whom there is all life. Thus, Paul says, “I do live – but not I – Christ lives in me. Eternal life is CHRIST IN US. He is our life.

The phrase, “I live, yet not I, but Christ,” shows that Christianity is Christ in us, and that eternal life is the result of our being joined to the One who is life. The verse also shows that in order for us to live with Christ as our life, we have to walk in the reality of being, “crucified with Christ.” Thus, Gal. 2:20 is an expansion on the words of Jesus, “If any one would save his life he must lose it....” (Matt. 16:24) Paul did lose his life – he was crucified WITH Christ. The result was, “Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ.”

Jul 28

Christ Lives in Us

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal. 2:20-21)

Many professing Christians walk as if CHRIST IN US is nothing more than some power to keep God's law. Their faith is not in HIM, but in the works they claim He is doing through them – many believe we are kept righteous by the works Jesus Christ does through us. But this is still righteousness through works. Unwittingly, they have put themselves right back under law as the basis for relationship with God.

Righteousness is the basis of relationship with God. But Paul says that this righteousness is not created, maintained, or based in law-keeping -- for if it were, then Christ died in vain. In short, the only righteousness we have is Jesus Christ in us – He is the righteousness of God. (I Cor. 1:30) But He is not our righteousness because of any works – not even the supposed works that He does through us. No. He is our righteousness because He IS righteous – period – and we are joined to Him. In short, we are righteous in Him completely apart from, and without any connection to, works of any kind.

The life Jesus lives in us is a righteous life because HE IS righteous. Any works, therefore, do nothing to create or maintain Him AS our righteousness. Rather, they are the product of His righteousness living in and through us. It is finished – good works are the outcome.

Jul 29

A Denial of Christ

For if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal. 2:21)

Righteousness is the basis of relationship with God. But not just a legal righteousness, but a living righteousness – in other words, righteousness is more than DOING, it is a matter of BEING IN HIM. Thus, Paul says that if such righteousness is possible through law-keeping, then there really isn't any reason why Christ needed to die. In that case, what Christ did through His death was always possible through works.

Most church-goers know that we cannot create or maintain righteousness through law-keeping. But this is exactly how most live – in an inward way. The reason is not usually rebellion – but ignorance. We are blind to the Person of Jesus Christ, in Whom we died and were raised. Thus, we don't rest in Him as our righteousness by faith. The result is that He is of, "no effect," for us. (Gal. 5:4) He may as well have died in vain.

Can we now see why Paul called legalism, "another gospel?"

Jul 30

Standing Aloof from Christ

I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. (Gal. 1:16)

The Galatians were trying to maintain their righteousness by law-keeping. But Paul said they were, “standing aloof” – from Jesus Christ. Why? Because Christ was not their righteousness; He was not their LIFE. They were bewitched by a false gospel. The Galatians were fully content that they were right with God. But in fact, Christ was of no effect for them. Happy but deceived is often the state of those under the law.

Paul said the solution to this error was, “that Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) Note that if the solution is that Christ be formed in us, then a Christian life based on my works must certainly mean He is NOT being formed in us. Indeed, Paul wrote to the Philippians that it was not until he lost his own righteousness, and found Christ as His righteousness, that he was able to truly, “win Christ, and be found in Him.” (Phil. 3:8-9)

The problem here is not theology. It is faith in Christ and the life that emerges – indeed, we are dealing with Christianity at the core. Those who teach this error are not merely teaching a few false things about Christianity – they are teaching a false Christianity. They are teaching a Christianity wherein Christ died in vain. (Gal. 2:21)

Jul 31

Learning the Grace of God

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13)

If we have seen the Truth of grace, and embraced it through Christ, as the basis of our life, what will be carried in that Truth? What will the grace of God teach or reveal to us? Not that we are free to sin because grace abounds. This is NOT what grace reveals -- even though if we sin grace always DOES abound. No. The revelation of grace in Christ will not only teach us, but motivate us by faith, “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.” We will want to live, “sober, righteous, and godly,” lives. In short, the true grace of God never leads to license. If I am in living in license, I have not embraced the Truth of His grace, but rather, I have denied it.

This is because of the nature of conversion to Christ: In order for a person to be saved, the conviction of God will have brought them to a, “Godly sorrow that works unto repentance not to be repented of.” (II Cor. 7:10) Thus, if a person has repented of sin, they will no longer want to sin. Thus, they aren’t going to embrace license. They will, despite failures, want to obey God; want to be free of sin. This is the impact on a person who has seen and values the grace of God.

Aug 1

Turning Grace Into License

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:4)

The Truth of grace cannot be turned in license and remain the Truth. Therefore, those who do turn it into license are deceivers – they are denying the only Lord. Furthermore, many who believe and teach such error are NOT SAVED – they have, “crept in unawares.” They are not saints, but, “ungodly men.”

There is a high profile preacher today who openly DENIES that in order to be saved that we need to repent and come to the Cross. He considers such teaching to be, “putting people down.” But let’s ask: If a person denies the need for repentance, how likely is it that he, himself, has repented? If a person considers the Cross needless, then how likely is it that he, himself, has come to the Cross? Clearly, this person has not repented, has not come to the Cross, and is therefore not saved. That is not a judgment of him. It is simply a conclusion based on his own teaching. Paul said, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness (Greek, “needless”), but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

If a person is saved, they GOT saved by believing and embracing Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Therefore, to deny these Truths but still claim to be saved is a contradiction. A saved person will not deny the Truth by which they were saved. A saved person will not deny Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Aug 2

Legalism, License, and Liberty

The solution for legalism is not license. The solution for license is not legalism. The solution is not a balance between legalism and license. No. They are two sides of the same coin of unbelief. The solution for both is faith in Jesus Christ as our only means of life and righteousness.

Christianity is, “Christ in us.” (Col. 1:27) The Christian walk is the outcome of faith in Christ as our life and our righteousness. Legalism bypasses Christ as our only righteousness and attempts to maintain our righteousness through works. License bypasses Christ as our righteousness and denies the need for righteousness altogether.

God never intended for man to create or maintain his own righteousness. Yet it is impossible to be made one with God unless we are made righteous. Thus, we must be made one with God on the basis of a righteousness not our own. When Jesus Christ joins us to Himself, His life becomes ours, and thus His righteousness is imparted to us. Liberty in Christ is a faith in Christ as our righteousness. We recognize Christ is made unto us righteousness (I Cor. 1:30) – and that this is the basis of a life before God.

Aug 3

Naked but Not Ashamed

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (Gen. 2:25)

This is God's description of humanity BEFORE Adam's sin. Thus, it is His original design. Man was created to be, "naked but not ashamed."

To be naked is to have NOTHING of yourself as a resource for life. Now note: This was not a bad thing, but a God-ordained thing. Man was MADE to have nothing in himself for life – God created man to BE naked. Why? Because man was created one with God – and thus all resources for life were to be found by man in God Himself.

But Adam was not only naked of all resource for life -- he was, "not ashamed." In other words, because originally Adam was one with God, and abiding in Him by faith, he was fully at home being without any resource in himself – he was fully alive and complete in God. There was no shame – no consciousness of lack or emptiness.

When we come to Christ, we are joined to Him in spirit and made one with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) We are therefore COMPLETE IN HIM. (Col. 2:9) He IS our life. (Col. 3:4) Thus, what we see is that the new birth is, in many ways, a restoration of what Adam lost through his sin and rebellion against God.

Aug 4

Naked and Ashamed

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked....and Adam said, "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Gen. 3:7-10)

BEFORE his sin, Adam was naked but unashamed. AFTER his sin, Adam was naked but ashamed. God created man to be naked, and thus, dependent upon God for life. Thus, the sin did not change the nakedness. Rather, the sin changed Adam – he was no longer unashamed -- but ashamed and afraid.

The reason for Adam's fear was that he was no longer one with God. God had been the source of all life for him before the sin – thus, despite being naked, he was unashamed. He was fully completed by God and without fear. But now, after the sin, Adam was all alone in his nakedness. He had declared independence from God and that is exactly what he got – he was alone and afraid, without resource for life. Or, to put it another way, Adam was now spiritually dead.

This is man in Adam – naked and ashamed – without realizing what is actually wrong with himself. The human race has tried every manner of solution to try to fix what ails us, including religion. But the only solution is that we must once again be made one with God as our life. Jesus Christ has restored this relationship.

Aug 5

The Fig Leaves

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Gen. 3:7)

Before his sin, Adam was naked but unashamed. After his sin, he was naked and ashamed. The reason for the change from unashamed to shame was that Adam was no longer one with God. God was no longer His life. Adam was dead.

Adam immediately tried to fix the damage. He was naked but without God as his source for life, and so he tried to cover his nakedness. He used fig leaves – a man made means to deal with the situation. But God made Adam to be naked. The solution would therefore never be to cover his nakedness. The only solution would be to confess his nakedness and come back to God for life.

Fig leaves represent any means we use to try to fix what sin has done. One of the most common fig leaves is that of our own righteousness. We try to make ourselves righteous by covering up our true condition with works. But God says, “This is a façade. It is a lie. You are naked. What you need is the righteousness found only in the Person of My Son.” Jesus Christ is the only true covering. Only in Him is there life.

Aug 6

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:1-2)

Why is there NO condemnation for those In Christ? Because, “the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death” – from the law’s power to condemn us for sin. In short, Jesus died FOR US – He met the death requirements of God’s law: “God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” and He, “condemned sin in the flesh.” Jesus fulfilled all death on the Cross.

Jesus Christ bore, “the old man of sin,” in His body on the Cross and died. Thus, through His death, “our old man is crucified in Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” (Rom. 6:6) But if the body of sin of the human race died with Christ, then justice is served. We are raised in Christ unto the newness of HIS life. There is no condemnation to Christ, and thus, none possible for those who are IN HIM.

The result is that, “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” If we are in Christ, the just requirement of the death is fully satisfied. And likewise the righteousness of the law is fulfilled IN US. How? Christ is in us – “He is made unto us to be...the righteousness of God.” (I Cor. 1:30) This is the law of the Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation possible.

Aug 7

In The Flesh

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. (Rom. 8:6-9)

If I am born from above, I am joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) This spiritual union automatically creates a division in me between what is within that spiritual union with Christ, and what is outside of it. This is the separation of our soul from our spirit. (see Heb. 4:12) What is within our union with Christ is the new creature in Christ; the new man; the inner man. What is outside of it is, “the flesh; the natural; the carnal; the earthly.” Thus, we have the warfare of flesh vs. spirit. (Gal. 5:17)

The carnal mind is a mind that is of, “natural man.” It operates from the knowledge and perspective – really from the LIFE – of that which is outside of our union with Christ. The carnal is governed by the earthly realm or environment. Worse, it is defined by the SELF principle: Everything and everyone is defined and valued by their relationship and effect upon ME.

Those who are, “in the flesh,” or, “walking according to the flesh,” are those who are governed, not by Christ as their life, but by what is outside of their union with Christ – even if they are saved. They are governed by their own interests, their own desires, and their own pride. They have not lost their life for Jesus’ sake. This is why those who are in the flesh cannot please God. They are walking contrary to all that Christ IS.

Aug 8

The Carnal Mind

For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. (Rom. 8:6-9)

The carnal mind is the SELF mind – it is the mind that operates from the SELF nature that is outside of our union in spirit with Christ. Jesus said we must deny SELF and lose this natural life, in order to find Him as our life. (Matt. 16:24) The SELF life wants to save itself FOR itself. This is why the carnal mind is at enmity against God – it’s very nature, motivation, and goals, are contrary to all that God is doing.

There are many ways to be carnally minded. But for the believer, the most common way is to try to live IN Christ -- but from OUT OF the flesh. We try to draw from the natural man as the source of life in the Lord. What emerges is carnal Christianity – not necessarily a sinful religion – but one that is of man, for man’s goals – supposedly FOR God. Much deception and error in the church finds at it’s root the neglect to lose one’s natural life in order to find Him as our life. Instead, we seek to save our life, and we develop a carnal Christianity geared to getting God to help us to do this.

Aug 9

One of Two Minds

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5)

Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit." (John 3:6) Those who are born of the flesh will do all things, "after the flesh." It is all they can do, because it is all they can BE. But those who are born from above can mind the things of the Spirit, but also the things of the flesh. Why? Because despite the fact that Christ is in us, we continue to have a natural, flesh man.

The word, "mind," is not limited to thoughts or imagination. It includes the will or intent. A growing saint is supposed to have a mind that is the result of being joined to the Lord as a new man. Paul says, "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." However, Paul also says, "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." These exhortations would be senseless if a saint could not set their mind on the earthly.

The mind of Christ is one that lives for God, has God's interests as the goal, and is able to discern all things through a knowledge of Jesus. Faith allows one with the mind of Christ to leave earthly needs and issues to God. But a person with a carnal mind cannot leave themselves alone. They might live religiously, "for God," but at best, there is nothing beyond an earthly, self-centered, version of Christianity.

Aug 10

The Spiritual Mind

To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

The spiritual mind is the mind of Christ. We might even say that the spiritual mind is a matter of always having Christ in mind – everything is governed by knowing Him. All discernment is the result of knowing Jesus Christ. All direction is the result of knowing Jesus Christ. All motivation is the result of knowing Jesus Christ.

No one can create a spiritual mindedness in themselves. There is nothing in us out of which to create it – you cannot turn a carnal mind into a spiritual mind – not even through study or obedience. That which is born of flesh IS flesh. Rather, you must first receive from above HIS LIFE. In His life is His mind. Then as you, "grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ," (II Pet. 3:18), you will grow to have His mind. CHRIST IN US is the basis for a spiritual mind. He must be formed in us, and as He is, we will come to know Him, and thus have His mind. But this is not without impact on the carnal mind. The spiritual mind will seek to drive out the natural mind – even the natural religious mind. Unless this is happening we will not get far in the purpose of God.

Aug 11

Knowing the Truth

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

Jesus did not come to affirm us, or to affirm what we believe. The words, “You SHALL know the Truth, and the Truth SHALL make you free,” indicate that man in Adam does NOT know the Truth, and is NOT free.

Man in Adam is born spiritually dead; without a shred of light or life in Him. That is because he is severed from God, who is the source of both. We are in this condition of death and darkness when we are saved. Christ is the Light and Life. He doesn't come to affirm us. He comes to set us free through a knowledge of Himself.

Most of us usually think of error as theological error – wrong doctrines, etc. But although these are affected, the real error is IN US – errors of faith, a double-mindedness, a heart that is not fully God's, self-righteousness, and a possession of ourselves. These conditions provide the ground for false teaching to find a home in our lives to begin with. The solution, therefore, is not merely true theology. Rather, we must BE MADE TRUE UNTO GOD.

If we know the Truth, that Truth will set us free – the Truth will make us true to God – by exposing all of the error and unbelief and revealing to us Christ. We will be able, “to walk in the light as He is in the Light.” (1 John 1:7) If we will hear the Truth and renounce error, we will be formed together with Christ and be able to fellowship with Him.

Aug 12

Governed by Christ

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

The children of God are ones who are GOVERNED by the Spirit of God. This means more than simply being, “led by God.” It would be a rather shallow Christian life if all God did was give us LEADINGS. No. Rather than simply give us leadings, God gives us Christ. He is seeking to form Christ in us. If we come into a inner knowledge and realization of the Christ who is in us, we will not only be governed by Him, but we will be able to discern what is of Him.

Many of us want God to speak His mind to us. But God wants us to HAVE His mind. (Phil. 2:5) This is not simply a matter of knowing what to do. Rather, it is a matter of having God's goals, attitude, and purpose in what we do.

All of this is captured in the term, “The Kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is the rule of God, or government of God that is IN US. (Luke 17:20-21) But this is not a THING. It is found in a Person, Jesus Christ. Christ IS the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:24)

Aug 13

Joint-Heirs With Christ

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:16)

A child of God is one who is born of God. This is the birth from above. It happens when Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) This is why John is able to say that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit – we are children of God because we are one in spirit with His Son, Jesus Christ.

God's purpose is inheritance in Christ for every child in Christ. But you will note that every aspect of this purpose is accomplished IN Christ; WITH Christ; and JOINTLY with Him. In other words, we do not get a piece of the inheritance, or have a throne of our own, on which to sit. No. We are joint-heirs WITH Christ, and we sit WITH Him IN HIS throne. (Rev. 3:21) In short, as we are partakers of Christ, we become partakers of all of His inheritance. To the extent that Christ governs IN US, we will govern WITH Him.

There is nothing God has for humanity outside of the Person of His Son. But in Christ, God has freely given us all things. God's plan of inheritance is: The Father, the Son, and all who are IN the Son. Everything God has for man is based upon our relationship with His Son.

Aug 14

Suffering With Christ

We are....joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. (Rom. 8:17)

A saint suffers WITH Christ if the suffering is the result of the forming of Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19) This suffering is what the Bible calls, "suffering for Jesus's sake," "suffering with Christ," or, "the fellowship of His sufferings." (Phil. 3:10) Another way to describe, "the fellowship of His sufferings," is that it is the result of, "losing one's life for Jesus' sake," so that we might find true life in Him for God's glory. (Matt. 16:24-25)

According to Paul, we cannot function as joint-heirs with Christ except it be the outcome of, "suffering WITH Him." Sure. The suffering crucifies our life, but releases HIS life through us. His life is inheritance. Thus, we see that even now there is a suffering that produces an inheritance in Christ -- in which we are joint-heirs.

When we, "bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus," such that, "the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest" (II Cor. 4:10), Christ has been formed in us. NOW we are joint heirs in Christ. But there will yet be a greater release in the eternal ages. Note the words: "Christ in you, the HOPE of glory." (Col 1:27) "Christ in us," during this age is a downpayment, limited by our natural frame. But He is in us unto, "the hope of glory" – a release into the fulness of all that Christ is.

Aug 15

The Inward Groaning

We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23)

The saint groans because until the redemption of our body, we are incumbered by the flesh. Paul groaned, “Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 7:24-25) Imagine being set free from the natural man and being in fellowship with Christ completely free and unhindered by YOU. This is the future of the saint: “Now we see through a glass darkly. Then face to face.” (I Cor. 13:12) Our natural man comprises much of the dark glass through which we see the Lord. Someday we will be free of it.

Of course, it is possible to NOW have a taste of what lies ahead. Christianity is, “Christ in you, the HOPE of glory.” (Col. 1:27) We can experience Christ NOW – but even this present experience is but a HOPE of an eternally greater fullness.

There are a number of passages in the Bible that speak about the future redemption of the Body. Some have misinterpreted these as saying that our salvation is not eternally secure. Or they are made to mean we can lose salvation -- if we don't hold fast until the end -- or that God is still in the process of saving us, but will save us, etc. But all of these passages are explained once we understand that in this age we are saved only in our spirit by being joined to the Lord, and not yet saved physically. Many of those verses are speaking of the redemption of our body which is yet to come, and not the redemption of our spirit which is already finished.

Aug 16

The Redemption of the Body

We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23)

What is salvation? Salvation is not a THING God gives us, sort of like a bucket of eternal life. Neither is it merely a new legal classification because of Christ. No. Salvation is life – it is HIS LIFE in us. Christianity is Christ in us. (Col. 1:27) And if He is in us, then Life Himself is in us. Thus, He is our life (Col. 3:4), and we are alive in Him. Even in the OT we read continually, “The Lord is my salvation.” (Ps. 27:1)

We are saved when Jesus Christ joins us to Himself and makes our spirit one with His Spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) This union is the new creature in Christ – it is where and how we are saved. But this also means that every part of us that is outside of that union with Christ is NOT presently saved. It remains natural. This is why you are saved, but your body isn't saved. Your emotions, soul life, temperament, and brain isn't saved – they are all natural. God wants them to come under the governing life of Christ, but in this age they are not OF that life. The redemption of the body is yet to come.

Aug 17

Our Flesh Will Not Behave

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Rom. 7:18-19)

A saint is one who has been joined to the Lord, and is therefore one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) That union IS the new creature in Christ. The very presence of Christ in us creates a separation in us -- between our union with Him, and what is not in union with Him – the flesh. Paul is talking about what is outside of resurrection union in Christ -- his emotions, temperament, body, and all is of the human soul realm. These do not act like a new creature in Christ. Despite Paul's desire to make them obey God, they simply will not behave. Why? Because they are not raised in Christ. They remain of the natural.

It is a fact that over the course of time, the natural is to be brought into subjection to the Christ Who dwells in us. But this is a life-long process. Paul's answer is that despite the fact that the flesh often seems to run rampant through us in ways that are contrary to Christ, that nevertheless there is no condemnation for those in Christ. The flesh is already under death. Christ is now our only life.

What this tells us is that our faith in Christ must not be moved by the fact that our flesh will not behave. Our faith is not to be based on whether our flesh behaves. Our faith is never to be based on anything that is outside of our spiritual union with Christ. Our natural man is not our life. Christ IS our life.

Aug 18

O Wretched Man That I Am

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 7:24)

There are some people who teach that Romans 7 is Paul's description of himself BEFORE his conversion. That is nonsense. It is Paul's description of himself AFTER his conversion – and a description of each one of us in Christ. If we go on with the Lord, we are going to more and more discover the wretchedness that is in our, "body of death." But it will not move us from the fact that our faith is not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Jesus Christ is IN US. And He is the Truth. Thus, the more we come to know Him, the more we will see all of the UNTRUTH about ourselves – but not unto condemnation from God. No. Unto freedom. The Truth about ourselves will show us that our faith must be solely in Christ. Paul could have forever lamented over himself. But rather, he had seen the Truth – Jesus Christ was his only life. Paul had been not only delivered from sin, but also brought into the freedom of leaving himself alone in Christ's hands.

Aug 19

The Battle for Faith

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. (Gal. 5:16-17)

Paul is telling us the solution for the lusts of the flesh is to, “walk in the Spirit.” Note that he does NOT give as the solution: Keep the law. Most of us have thought that the warfare in the Christian life is for obedience to the law. We think faith in Christ will somehow give us power to obey God’s law. But do we realize that when we make keeping the law THE GOAL of the Christian life that we have put ourselves right back under the law – even if we think faith will enable us to keep it? No. Paul says, “the law is not of faith.” (Gal. 3:12) Faith does not put us back under the law. Faith sets us free to live from Christ through the Spirit. This is what it means to, “walk in the Spirit.”

It is virtually impossible to make someone see the Truth on this matter if they are still under the law. They will accuse you of teaching license. They just don’t see and cannot see – they must be brought to the end of their delusion by failure.

The warfare in the Christian life is one of FAITH. The issue is not what I do, but the issue is in whom I am putting my faith. All obedience in the Christian life is to be the outcome of faith in Christ. But rather than make law-keeping the GOAL, this means that faith is the goal -- obedience to God being an outcome of resting in Him.

Aug 20

A Work of the Flesh

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings. (Gal. 5:19-21)

Most of the works of the flesh on this list are not surprising. But among them is listed, “heresies.” Heresy is OF the flesh. The Greek word denotes, “a choosing.” That might seem odd, but think of this in terms of a person choosing for themselves what will be the truth. In other words, heresy is a work of the flesh because it is the result of a person deciding for themselves what the Truth will be – based on their lusts, bias, ignorance, and unbelief of the flesh. Anytime I adjust the Truth to fit myself, believe a teaching because it fits me, or try to produce the Truth from out of myself, I am choosing what Truth will be – it is a work OF my flesh – and it is heresy.

There are always reasons why you and I will believe lies and heresy: We will believe a lie if it fits a lie that is in us. Or, to put it another way, we will believe a lie if there is not Truth in us. This need not be conscious. But it is why people are deceived. The real question, however, is what we do when presented with the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ? How will we then choose?

Aug 21

The Real Person

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Cor. 5:16-17)

To know someone, “after the flesh,” is a two-way street. First, we know them after OUR flesh – we interpret them according to US. Second, we know them after THEIR flesh. But Paul said that this should no longer be the basis of how we know we each other. We should know each other according to, and, in Christ.

But embedded in this verse is another great Truth: God does not know us after our flesh. No. He knows us in His Son. That ought to be good news. Our flesh does not behave according to the Truth. But God looks at the real person – who we are to Christ, and who Christ is to us.

God inspired, “all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13) God looks at our heart and at our faith – the real us. The flesh is but a façade. It is all a cover up. What God wants to do right now in His people is to strip off the façade and reveal Christ IN US.

Aug 22

Knowing According to Christ

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh....therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. (II Cor. 5:16-17)

What constitutes the new creature in Christ Jesus? It is spiritual union of Jesus Christ with our human spirit. That is the new man. All that is outside of that – our natural man or flesh – is not the new creature. It remains of the old.

Most Christian people, however, do not know each other by the means of Christ. Rather, we do know each other according to the flesh. We define others according to OUR flesh, and we define them according to THEIR flesh. We look at personality, temperament, and even outward talents, and based on those, we think we know someone. In fact, most of us even create God out of our own imagination and religious bias. We know Jesus Christ by the means of our natural man or flesh.

How often those with outgoing personalities are mistaken for spiritual people! In contrast, how often those who do not have good social skills are considered to be lacking in Christ! In the Body of Christ today, it is often about personality. It is about friendliness. It is about feigned love and charisma. But this is all OF the natural man. According to Paul, NOT ONE of these things matter to God. What matters is the life of Christ in us. We can know nothing except we see through a knowledge of HIM.

Aug 23

I Never Knew You

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in Your name have cast out devils? and in Your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:22-23)

Most of realize that we need to know Jesus Christ. Obviously, these people did not know Jesus. But Jesus said something else to them – He said that HE did not know THEM. In fact, this is the basis for His judgment upon them.

What does it mean for Jesus to KNOW US? It means that we have fully opened ourselves to Him, and allowed Him to make Himself at home in us. We are in the Light as He is in the Light. We have fellowship with Him. Of course, Christ already does know us – completely. But Jesus is speaking of a person’s willingness to allow Him access. These people gave Him no access – they were hiding behind all of the things they had done FOR Him. They were evidencing a self-righteousness. Indeed, after these people rehearsed all the good things they did FOR Jesus, He called them, “you that work iniquity.” Hide yourself from Christ and rely upon your works, and, in the eyes of Christ, this is what you are. Self-righteousness is not only deception, but it is sin. Ultimately, it is the result of not giving Christ access -- the people in this parable are the tragic outcome of faith in what I have done for God, rather than in what Christ has done for me.

Aug 24

Dominion Over Faith

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (II Cor. 1:24)

People who have dominion over the faith of other people all have common traits. First, all of them claim to have God-given authority to do so. Thus, they claim to speak for God. Second, based on this claim of authority, they determine for others what to believe and how to live – all, “in the name of love.” Third, they claim that if you refuse to obey them, you will face consequences from God. If you can convince people you speak for God you can get them to do almost anything – you can get them to knowingly drink Koolaid with poison in it. People who demand dominion over the faith of others are spiritually sick people. They are never servants of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of all true ministry is NEVER to have dominion over the faith of another, not even, “for their good.” No. The purpose of true ministry is to get people into their own relationship with Christ so that HE can have dominion over them as their only Lord. Being available to teach, and to give counsel, is much different that thinking you are God’s authority over them in His stead. There is ONE Head of the Body. And there is ONE Mediator between God and man. There are NO sub-heads. There are no sub-mediators. No one who knows Jesus Christ will violate these basic Christian Truths.

Aug 25

Edification, Not Destruction

For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed. (II Cor. 10:8)

There have always been those in the body of Christ who have claimed to have authority from God over the lives of others. In most cases, they will teach that you need to submit to them in order to keep in God's will – and in many cases, it doesn't matter if they happen to be wrong. They claim God will nevertheless back them up as His authority. In short, it is your job to submit to them. It is their job to hear from God FOR YOU. Such teaching is not the Truth; not freedom in Christ. It is, in fact, heresy.

Paul was an apostle, and as such, the highest authority in ministry. Yet he told those he taught that his authority over them was the authority of TRUTH – his ministry was to preach the Truth and thus edify each believer in Christ. How is this done? By being a vessel through whom Christ could minister life – and thus establish each person fully mature in Christ FOR THEMSELVES. Paul said he had NO authority to tear down the relationship another person had with Jesus. But this destruction is exactly what happens if a leader makes relationship with God contingent upon a person's submission to them. This cuts off the believer from direct access to God and tears apart the very fabric of Christianity – Christ in the individual.

A sure sign of spiritual destruction is when unity is imposed through law – a law that requires submission to a leader if we are to keep right with God. But a sure sign of edification is when unity is the result of LIFE -- EACH believer established in Christ for themselves, resulting in a voluntary and automatic unity with each other in Him.

Aug 26

Spiritual Guides

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation. (Heb. 13:7)

No spiritual leader in the Body of Christ has the, "rule over you." Paul emphatically states that elsewhere. (see II Cor. 1:24 and II Cor. 10:8) This verse from Hebrews is a rather woeful translation. It could be paraphrased, "Allow yourself to be persuaded of the Truth by those who are your spiritual guides. Follow them as an example only as they follow Christ in Truth. This will be evidenced by their lives."

Leadership must take strong action to protect the church from heresy or other sin. But this is much different than leadership imposing their authority on the personal lives of others. True ministry is the outcome of the work of the Cross in the minister so that LIFE might be ministered to others. Paul said, "We have this ministry....so then death worketh in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:1,12) Try to impose life through law and what you will create is death.

Aug 27

This is the Work of God

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (John 6:28-29)

The, “work of God,” is faith. That is obviously a play on words. But it is a fact. There is absolutely nothing we can do to merit anything from God. But faith is the outcome of realizing I have no merits. There is nothing we can do to help ourselves. But faith is the outcome of realizing there is nothing I can do. In short, faith comes to be in me if I hear the Truth about my hopelessness, and God’s grace in Christ.

The epistle to the Hebrews has a similar phrase, “Let us labor to enter His rest.” (Hebrews 4:11) Get that: Labor in order to rest. In one sense of the word, it is only if we work ourselves to exhaustion that we will finally come to the end of our rope and see the Truth, and rest solely in Christ. In another sense, faith is a work because it is the one choice we can make when we see that we can do nothing else to help ourselves.

Faith is not our contribution to our own salvation. Rather, it is a withdrawal from God of what He freely gives. Once we see we have nothing to contribute then will be able to put our faith solely upon Jesus Christ.

Aug 28

The True Sabbath Rest

There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. (Heb. 4:9-10)

God created the first creation in six days, including man himself on the sixth day. He rested on the seventh day, not because He was tired, but as a celebration of His finished work. That first creation fell into the realm of darkness when Adam sinned against God.

Through Jesus Christ, rather than repair or resussitate the old creation, God has made a brand new creation. Jesus Christ ushered in this new creation in HIMSELF by being raised from the dead on the first day of a new week – showing that His life would be a brand new start of a brand new creation – one that had never existed before. Indeed, if we want to consider the resurrection to have occurred on the eighth day, eight is the number for resurrection in scripture.

In the new creation, the sabbath rest is not a day, but a Person. We, “remember the sabbath and keep it holy,” by entering into Christ, the Rest of God, by ceasing from all of our labors, and resting in His finished work. To continue to keep the seventh day, or any day, does nothing. We are to rest in Christ as the sabbath rest that remains for the people of God.

Aug 29

The Seed of Abraham

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ...and if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:16,29)

There is only ONE seed of Abraham: Jesus Christ. He IS the Promise of the Father, who joins His people to Himself by His Spirit. But if we are IN Christ, then through that oneness with Him, we are likewise the seed of Abraham, and joint-heirs with Him. God has freely given all that He has to give us IN His Son. There is therefore nothing outside of Christ that God has to give. Thus, to the extent that we are partakers of Christ, we are partakers of the eternal inheritance.

The eternal purpose of God can be stated as such: The Father, the only begotten Son of God, and then, all who are in the Son. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2) "The Father's house," is a term that always represents inheritance – in this case, Christ Himself. Jesus said He was preparing a place of inheritance for us in Himself. Hebrews affirms, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. (Heb. 12:5-6) The word translated, "receives," means, "positions." Jesus Christ is positioning us in Himself as the Father's house – that we might receive in Him an inheritance. This is the destiny of the Seed of Abraham.

Aug 30

Heavenly Places in Christ

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

The way to receive blessing from God is not by keeping laws, rules, or principles. It is not by anything we do whatsoever. It is not the result of practicing the right religion. ALL of the blessings of God are found solely in His Son. Thus, it is through experiencing Christ that the blessings of God come into our experience.

If we are born from above, Christ is already in us – He has joined us to Himself in spirit. Thus, "heavenly places," are not a places in heaven. No. "Heavenly places," are in Christ – the same Christ who dwells in us NOW. And so, because Christ is in us, those, "heavenly places," are of His life in us. This means that NOW, in Christ, we have been blessed – if you will, imparted with, all spiritual blessings from the Father.

The spiritual blessings in heavenly places are found in Christ, and because Christ is in us, we are blessed with them through Him. Thus, everything God has to give to us is found only in His Son, and nothing of value is found elsewhere. The work of the Spirit is to form Christ in us, and as this happens, the blessings in Him are likewise unfolded.

Aug 31

The Basis of Christ in Us

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

When we are born from above, Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) But the natural man remains. Thus, we have the separation within each believer of the new creation – our resurrection union with Christ in spirit – and all the is outside of that, which remains of the old man in Adam.

All that God has for us is found in Jesus Christ – and is ministered to us through the very life of Christ that dwells in us. Yet because we do not understand this Truth, many of us continue to try to merit, receive, and live in, those blessings on the basis of the old life – on the basis of the natural man that continues to be part of our makeup. We think that we must make our flesh behave to earn blessings. We think that God wants to bless our old life and our old nature and bring out the best in them. No. God wants to crucify our old life – which is why Jesus told us that we must pick up our Cross daily and LOSE our lives in order to find Christ as our life. It is futile to try to walk with Jesus Christ on the basis of our old nature. We must put all of it aside and leave it alone, and realize that God is forming Christ in us and bringing us into a new life and creation.

Sep 1

The One Elect

According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. (Eph. 1:4-5)

There is only ONE elect of God – Jesus Christ. You will note that everyone else is chosen IN HIM – and that this election is unto, not salvation – that is already settled at that point – but unto a purpose FOR the saved: “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” The notion that God elects some to salvation, and other to damnation, and that this was settled before any of us were born, is not only nonsense, but heresy. It is another gospel, and misrepresents the character and purpose of God through Christ.

We are chosen, not – to BE in Him – but chosen BECAUSE we are in Him. In other words, God must taken the initiative to draw someone to Christ (Jn. 6:44), and because God is doing it, that person will, “arrive,” (Jn. 6:37) at a point where they can either embrace Christ by faith, or refuse through unbelief. If the person comes to Christ then they are IN CHRIST. And if a person is IN CHRIST then they are chosen IN HIM for all of the plan and purpose of God that is in Christ. All that God has given and is doing is IN CHRIST. As the only begotten Son, He is the one elect of God. The Father, the Son, and all who are in the Son – this is the plan of God in terms of inheritance.

Sep 2

Complete in Christ

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

In Christ dwells ALL of the fullness of DIETY bodily – this is the correct translation and a direct statement to the effect that Jesus Christ, The Son of Man, is nevertheless fully God. But Paul not only says that in Christ dwells all the fullness of God, but he also tells us that Christ dwells in US. Thus, we are COMPLETE in Him.

To be complete in Christ is not the same as being mature in Christ. The saint has to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. (II Pet. 3:18) Christ must be formed in us (Gal. 4:19), and we must be formed together with Him. (Rom. 8:29) But none of that could happen unless we were already complete – have ALL -- in Him.

Those words, “you are complete in Him,” carry tremendous ramifications. Indeed, most of Colossians 2 is a warning against those who would suggest we are NOT complete solely in Jesus Christ. This Truth means that the moment Christ comes to dwell in us we have ALL that God has to give. Paul affirms by saying, “God has freely given us all things in Christ.” (see Rom. 8:32) It also means that there is NOTHING left to receive – if we are complete in Christ we do not continue to need to receive some other gift, or dimension of life, to come into the full purpose of God. No. IN CHRIST dwells the fullness of God – and Christ is IN US. Now, He simply needs to be unfolded.

Sep 3

The Fullness of God in Christ

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

Christianity is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) This is because IN CHRIST dwells the fullness of God, and in the believer dwells Christ. This makes us complete in Christ – not incomplete, or lacking, in any resource that God has for us.

So much error in the Christian church is the result of neglecting or denying this one Truth – that the believer is complete SOLELY in Christ. Instead, we have added additional experiences to Christ, saying only then do we have all that God intends. We have mandated that believers belong to a church or to a group – saying only then can they be complete. Or we have demanded obedience to laws and rules as the means of completing the believer. No. If Christ is in us, we are complete – in HIM.

It is only because we are already complete in Christ that it is possible for Christ to be formed in us. Since we are already complete in Christ, it is possible to discover, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” that are, “hid in Him.” (Col. 2:3) You will note that there is nothing ADDED to Christ. No. All these things are FROM HIM. He is all.

Sep 4

Hid With Christ in God

You are complete in Him...for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.
(Col. 2:9, 3:3-4)

Christ has not merely given us a new life because He died, but He has given us HIMSELF – if we are in Him, HE IS our life. This is how we are complete in Him. Everything is within life, and nothing is outside of it – and the Person of Christ constitutes the very life of the believer.

It is difficult for most of us to get away from the idea that because of Christ we are given a thing or classification called LIFE. Or that because of Christ, we are given a thing called, “forgiveness.” But in reality, we are given CHRIST HIMSELF. We are joined to Him and have become ONE with Him in spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) Thus, it is IN HIM that we have life – HIS LIFE – indeed, in Him we have all things freely. (Rom. 8:32)

If Christ is our life then, “we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.” Practically speaking, this means that we are dead to living from out of ourselves. We are no longer the source of anything. But rather, we are alive to living by faith FROM OUT OF Christ – He is our resource for all things spiritual and material. Much of the work of the Spirit of God is geared to showing us we are dead and that Christ is our life, and in teaching us how to live by faith in this reality.

Sep 5

If Christ Be in You

And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. (Rom. 8:10)

This is another way of describing the separation in each believer between the new creature in Christ and all that remains outside of that new creation -- and remains carnal. When we are saved, we are planted into His death – and we find that our body of sin is dead because of His death for our sin. We are also planted into His resurrection, and this joining of our spirit with Christ makes us alive with Him. The rest of the Christian life is a matter of us coming to walk in the Truth of these finished realities – we have to lose what is dead in order to find Christ as our life.

Note that all of this is the result of CHRIST IN US. Until Christ is in us, there is no separation between life and death in us – but there is only death. Until Christ is in us, there is no means by which we can be set free from untruth, because there no Truth in us. In Christ are all things that are of God, because all of the fullness of God dwells in Him. What an amazing Truth: God is in Christ and Christ is in us. The plan of God: The Father, the only begotten Son, and all of those who are in the Son.

Sep 6

The Family of God

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. (Eph. 3:14-15)

God is not a family. But God has a family. Note that this means that God is NOT reproducing Himself by making us all, “little gods” -- and that this constitutes a family who IS God. No. That is the basis of some terrible heresy. Rather, believers will never be God, little gods, or divine. We are partakers of Divine nature -- not because we have been given a divine nature of our own -- but we are partakers of Divine nature only if we are partakers of Christ. In short, there is Father God, then His only begotten Son, who became God incarnate, and finally, there are all who are IN the Son. We are in the family of God only because we are in the Son, and the Son is in the Father.

The phrase, “ye are gods,” (John 10:34) must be taken in context from where it is quoted, Ps. 82:6-7: “Ye are gods; and **all of you are children** of the most High. But ye shall die like men.” Clearly, this is just an expression – and the context shows it means, “children of God.” This is verified by the rest of scripture. A child of God is not a little god, but exactly as stated above, as one who is a child of God in Christ. In short, He is the only begotten Son, and we are children of God only if we are IN HIM.

Sep 7

The Devils Believe and Tremble

Do you believe that there is one God? You do well. The devils also believe, and tremble. (Js. 2:19)

There is a common misconception among Christian people – perhaps unspoken – that if I believe the right things, that this is equal to being right with God. But Satan and his demons know every doctrine of the Bible. Satan quotes scripture – he knows what it says. For Satan to deceive people with error, he has to know the Truth. Thus, Satan, “believes,” the right things. But has rejected the Truth.

People gather together a statement of faith and assume that doing so means they have the faith of Jesus Christ. Yet it is possible to do all of that and not even be saved. Or to not really know Jesus. For true faith is not merely belief in the right things or right facts about Jesus. It is surrender and reliance upon Christ Himself. This is what the phrase, “Believe ON the Lord Jesus,” means.

It is possible to hold to sound Biblical doctrine, but to do it in an unloving or even militant way – to condemn others who don’t see the Truth you see. Ironically, this is a great blindness TO Christ, all the while holding to doctrines that speak OF Him. But none of these kinds of motives are the outcome of faith, but rather, the result of unbelief. God wants us to know and believe true doctrine. But He wants us to obey it and know Christ Himself. If we do, we may speak the Truth, but we will do it in love.

Sep 8

The Light of Men

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

How does a person receive LIGHT – which is the true knowledge of God in Christ JESUS? John says that the LIGHT is in His LIFE. Sure. Jesus is a Person who is both the LIGHT and the LIFE. Both are found in Him alone. Or, to put it another way, if Christ is in us, He is our life. And this is why it is then possible to grow to know Him.

Paul used a phrase that captures Jesus as both light and in the believer: He said, “I travail until Christ be FORMED in you.” (Gal. 4:19) In the original language, the phrase, “formed in you,” means, “to be inwardly realized and expressed.” That shows that if Christ is in us as our life, that God wants to bring us into a realization of Him. I that happens, Christ will not only be our LIFE, but what will emerge from Him is also a growing LIGHT, or knowledge of Him.

Resurrection life in Jesus Christ is not a static life. Once Christ is in us, His life will seek to push through our natural makeup until Christ is manifested. Of course, we can abort this process, but it is nevertheless the will of God to form Christ in us so that He can be known. This is really the meaning when Jesus promised that the Spirit of God would, “guide us into all Truth.” If Christ is alive in us, then the light of Him can emerge.

Sep 9

The Light of His Life

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

The Light of the world, Jesus Christ, is also The Life. Thus, since Jesus Christ is a Living Person, it is correct to say that His Light and His Life are ONE. If you want the Light of God you have to have Jesus Christ as your LIFE: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3)

One of the great errors of Gnosticism that infiltrated the early church, and remains today, is the idea that knowledge, or light, is a THING to obtain – and that doing so will get you closer to God. In a Christian context, this would be the error of saying that the more you know about Jesus, or about doctrine, the closer you are to God. Or it would be to say that you cannot abide in Christ until you first find some secret, hidden light. No. Scripture makes it clear that, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid IN Christ.” (Col. 2:3) Thus, light is not a THING to obtain separate from Christ so that you can abide in Him. Rather, in order receive light, we must FIRST abide in Christ by faith. Then, as we abide in Him for all our life – He will also be our light. IN HIM is life – and that life IS the LIGHT of men.

All that God has for us is found IN HIS SON. And God has freely given all things in Jesus Christ.

Sep 10

Jesus Is Come in the Flesh

Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (I John 4:1-4)

The Bible as a whole is the written standard for Truth. But in the Bible there are given several direct tests for Truth, and this is one of them: “Jesus is come in the flesh.” This test for Truth is actually saying that the very definition of Christianity is the basis for all Truth: “Christ in us,” (Col. 1:27) – i.e., the Truth of Jesus Christ as one in spirit with flesh and blood human beings who are born of God. All that is of the spirit of God will tell the Truth about the relationship of the Living Christ with flesh and blood.

Gnosticism, against which this test is given, taught that Jesus did not become a real human being – the Word did not BECOME flesh. Rather, they taught that Jesus merely appeared as a man. Gnosticism taught that God would never have anything to do with the material world, let alone actually become one of us. As it pertains to the saint, this would mean error will deny or distort the Truth of Christ in us – error will make it mean something it does not mean, or minimize it; blind people to it in favor of something else. The Spirit of God will always bring out the Truth of the Jesus Christ who lives in us. and continually reveal Him to us, in us, and through us.

Note the tense: Jesus Christ IS COME in the flesh. It is because Jesus Christ DID come in the flesh dwelt among us – that now, He IS come to dwell in us: Christ in us, the hope of glory. God once became man so that God could now live in man.

Sep 11

The Spirit of Anti-Christ

...and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist... (I John 4:1-4)

The spirit of antichrist will always distort or deny the Truth of Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh. The definition of Christianity, “Christ in us,” (Col. 1:27) will either be twisted, or believers will be blinded to the reality of Christ within.

One common ploy of the enemy is to distort the separation between the Christ who is in us and our natural man. Despite the fact that we are joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17), we are never Christ and Christ is never us. Likewise, Christ is the source of all – we are not the source of anything. But there are many teachings today that suggest that Christ died to bring out OUR greatness, or that God wants us to, “look like Jesus.” No. God wants US to come under the work of the Cross so that CHRIST might be made manifest. (II Cor. 4:10) We must be made conformable to His death, so that HE might be seen through us – this is the Truth of Christianity.

Sep 12

Is Jesus Accursed, or Lord?

...that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 12:3)

Paul is referring to something that was common to heathen religion and idol worship – which would have been familiar to the Greek Corinthians. In those heathen religions, an “accursed,” person was one who was devoted to destruction by the worshipper into the hands of a pagan god. The sacrifice was devoted to the wrath of the angry god as a substitute for the worshipper – in other words, once the pagan god accepted the blood of the accursed sacrifice, any wrath or punishment could be lifted from the worshipper.

Now, if you are honest, you recognize that this is exactly the kind of redemption that many Christian people believe – except they paste on the scheme the names of Jesus as the sacrifice, and the Father as the God. Many believe that Jesus was the accursed sacrifice, devoted to the wrath of God as a substitute for us, so that God could then lift from us that wrath, and forgive us. And yet this is precisely what Paul says is NOT the Truth – indeed anyone who teaches it cannot be speaking by the Spirit of God.

The Truth is that Jesus is Lord – and the context is the Redemption. Jesus did not become accursed – He did not die to bear God’s wrath so that His wrath could be averted from us. Rather, Jesus bore OUR SIN. Yes, He bore the judgment for sin for us, but having done that, was raised out of that death. This made Him Lord of all.

Note that there are two completely contrasting pictures of the Redemption involved here – because there are two contrasting pictures of God Himself. Did God SO LOVE the world that He gave Christ to die for us so that we could be saved from our sin? Or was God SO MAD at the world that He gave His own Son so we could be saved from His own wrath? Two different gospels. Two different Saviors.

Sep 13

Spiritual Gifts vs. Natural Gifts

Natural gifts are of the natural birth – that which is born of flesh IS flesh. (Jn. 3:6) But spiritual gifts are of out from the birth from above. It is good and right to take a natural gift and offer it from ourselves up to God -- and let God use it to His glory. But a spiritual gift is not given from ourselves to God. It is given of God to us. God GIVES spiritual gifts. They are not of the natural makeup. They are of Christ.

Now, of course, when a gift operates through a saint, it operates THROUGH the saint. The Spirit of God does not BYPASS us. But this is why there is often confusion. The spiritual gifts are not from out of natural man. There are merely through us. The spiritual gifts are outward expressions of the life of Christ through us by the Spirit of God. Their purpose is always to build up others in Christ – the purpose of the Spirit of God, according to Jesus, is to testify, glorify, and bring us into a knowledge of HIM.

Sep 14

Stewards of the Mysteries of God

Let a man so account of us: As the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (I Cor. 4:1-2)

In the first century, a steward owned nothing. But he was in charge of his master's possessions. A FAITHFUL steward would be faithful to his master – he would treat his possessions according to this fact – that all belonged to his master.

FAITHFULNESS, before it means anything else, speaks of a RELATIONSHIP. If I am faithful, I have to be faithful to some standard or person. Thus, a minister who is a, “faithful steward of the mysteries of God,” is one who is first faithful to God Himself – everything he does emerges from that -- and this results in that steward never taking ownership over what belongs to God, but always freely giving to others – as God directs - - what God gives to him.

Faithfulness, as noted, is never taking personal ownership over that which belongs to God and using it for myself. To say that positively, faithfulness is allowing what always belonged to God to continue to belong to Him – I treat His possessions accordingly with reverence. This definition of faithfulness is also the definition of holiness. A faithful steward never puts the hand of flesh to that which belongs to God.

Scripture tells us that we do not even belong to ourselves. (I Cor. 6:19) Therefore, the faithful steward will not take ownership over even himself. This is the RELATIONSHIP with Christ which ought to govern all – I am faithful over THINGS because I am faithful to the One who is Lord of all.

Sep 15

Wrath Will Praise Him

The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath You shall restrain. (Ps. 76:10)

Some have made this verse to mean that if God allows evil then evil is God's will. That is error. Evil is never God's will. But it is often God's will to allow evil – it is often God's will to allow that which is NOT His will. This is not a contradiction. A sovereign God is perfectly free to allow that which is against His will. The free will of humanity, and the eternal purpose of God, demand this.

God allows sin. But by definition, sin is AGAINST the will of God. Therefore, it is folly to say that sin IS the will of God. Psalm 76:10 is simply declaring that God will have the last word. He will eventually make even wrath or rebellion against His will to praise Him – even if it does nothing more than prove that the will of God was the only Truth, and the only way to life. The wrath of man may take it's best shot. But in the end, God will be praised.

Sep 16

Christ Made Unto Us All Things

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:29-31)

Passages like this one are intended by God to show us that Christianity is not a matter of us being made to look like Jesus. Rather, it is a matter of us being crucified so that the Christ who is in us might be seen. God does not make us, or give us, THINGS like wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. No. God gives us Christ, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This is so certain that Paul says, "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." In short, this is Christ in us – it is not us trying to be like Jesus.

Religious man always tries to do from out of himself, in himself, and through himself, what only Christ can BE and DO through Him. Why? Because he has side-stepped the Cross. The Cross will crucify ALL of that – we must lose our natural self to the Cross, in order that Christ be manifested as our life. Obedience will be the natural outflow of Christ as our life – we will not be trying to make Him our life through human effort.

The person through whom Christ is manifested is not TRYING through human effort to look like Jesus. Rather, the person has left themselves alone, and is abiding in the Vine by faith. Someone once said that those who manifest Christ the most are aware of it the least. This would always be the result of losing one's life to Christ – we would no longer be trying to be something – even if we say it is for God. "Yet not I, but Christ..."

Sep 17

What is Sanctification?

Sanctification is Jesus Christ in us, coming to be seen through us. (1 Cor. 1:30) It is NOT us made to act like Jesus. Sanctification happens as the outcome of our choice of faith. But that choice of faith is not so much that we read about Christ and try to be like Him. Rather, we lose our lives, and find Him as our life. The result is not human effort, but His life flowing through us – and we move with Him.

Sanctification is, of course, holiness. But holiness means that I belong to God, and not to myself. Thus, holiness is not a matter of me taking ownership over myself in an attempt to be like Jesus. That is of the flesh even if I convince myself that I am doing it FOR GOD. No. True holiness is the result of leaving myself – indeed, losing myself – to Christ, that He might be in me all that He desires. In short, sanctification is HIS LIFE being seen through me, which is impossible, as long as my life – even if it is religious and well-practiced – is in tact.

One of the greatest hindrances to real sanctification is not sin, but religious man alive and well, trying to sanctify his own life. Jesus Christ in us is the only holy life.

Sep 18

Holiness vs. Unholiness

“Holiness,” “sanctification,” the name, “saint,” all come from the same Greek root. That root means, “to be set apart for God’s use.” In more modern terms, this simply means TO BELONG TO GOD.

The SAINT is a person who belongs to God – we are not our own, but are bought with a price. (I Cor. 6:19) Normally, what this means is that we must not sin. We must not use ourselves for anything that is contrary to the will of God. But whether we realize it or not, it also means that we must not belong to ourselves at all. Jesus told us we must lose our lives to Him – this would mean we belong to Him and are therefore holy. But this also means that if we do not lose our lives fully to Him that we continue to belong to ourselves. This would be unholiness.

It is possible to continue to belong to yourself in a religious way – trying to make yourself look like Jesus; trying to be what you think you have to be to get something from God; trying to bring yourself into spiritual maturity through your own efforts. Most people who do these things think that are doing God’s will. But what they are doing, and how they are doing it, is secondary. The real problem is that they have never lost their lives to Christ – and thus they are governed by the spirit of self-ownership. This is unholy.

The spirit of self-ownership is unholy because, by definition, I don’t belong to God, but to myself, even if I say it is for His will. And if that is the case, I cannot be holy, because the basis of my life is on an unholy foundation.

Sep 19

Religious Natural Man

Religious, natural man owns himself – and it is out of that self-ownership that he tries to live for God. Then he laments when God won’t help him. Indeed, it is even possible to offer to God a faith, simply because we think doing so will get something from Him. None of this is Christianity. Indeed, it is the outcome of being blind to the Cross; of neglecting the Cross; or of refusing it. The Cross applied in the personal life will absolutely expose and bring to an end all of the attempts of natural man to live for God.

Jesus told us that there is only one thing we can do with our natural lives: LOSE them by picking up the personal Cross. Then abide in Christ. Until we do we are going to try to live for God on the basis of ourselves. But if we will lose our lives for the sake of Jesus by picking up our personal Cross, then we will find, and be able to live from OUT OF, Jesus Christ as our life.

The blindness of the church to the essential of the personal Cross, coupled with the blindness to the fact that Christianity is CHRIST IN US – the two always go together – this blindness accounts for the spiritual sickness of the last two-thousand years.

Sep 20

Walking in the Spirit

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal 5:25)

What does it mean, “to walk in the Spirit?” It means to live from out of Jesus Christ as my life – drawing upon Him for all things. If we are saved, we are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) But since Jesus Christ is THE LIFE, then if I am one with Him in spirit, then I am alive with HIS life – indeed, Christ IS my life. (Col. 3:4) Thus, to walk in the Spirit is to walk in that spiritual union with Him, living from OUT OF HIM by faith.

Jesus Himself said that the purpose of the Spirit of God was to reveal HIM to us, in us, and through us. His words to that effect are all through John, chapters 14 thru 16. The purpose of the Spirit was never to create a Christianity, or a movement, centered around the Spirit. (see John 16:13) This has minimized the Person of Jesus Christ, and has blinded millions to the fact that Christianity is Christ in us (Col. 1:27), and that the purpose of God is to, “form Christ in us.” (Gal. 4:19) Indeed, Paul stated, “Now the Lord is that Spirit...” (2 Cor 3:17) All of this is important because many today have made, “walking in the Spirit,” a matter of something other than walking in Christ. They have made it a matter of following leadings, signs and wonders, and what amounts to psychic sensations. No. The Lord IS that spirit, and to walk in that spirit is to walk in Christ – living from out of Him as our life.

Sep 21

The Spirit of His Life

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

How do we, “NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh?” Not by turning in upon the flesh and beating it down. Not by coming under laws intended to keep us from walking in the flesh. Not through emotions, intellect, or any human effort. The only way to NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh is by, “walking in the Spirit.”

Note that we step out of the flesh by stepping into the Spirit – rather than try to defeat the flesh. This is because the victory is already won in Christ -- we are already dead to the flesh, and alive in God. The Spirit in which we are to walk is, “the Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus.”

Paul also said, “**If Christ is in you**, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit IS LIFE because of righteousness.” (Rom. 8:10) Note: The body is dead and the Spirit is LIFE – because Christ is IN US. Thus, to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh means to step outside of ourselves – our natural life – and into His life which is in us by His Spirit. The key to victory in the Christian life is not to win a victory. No. It is, by faith, to abide in Christ.

Sep 22

The Lusts of the Flesh

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

In scripture, the phrase, “the lusts of the flesh,” refers to the nature of self-ownership and all of it’s working. “Lust,” is a desire to own or control. This lust is found, through birth, In Adam -- our old life seeks to own SELF. The key to victory over this lust is therefore to LOSE the old life in Adam. Lose your SELF to Christ, pick up your Cross, and all the power of lust that comes from the old nature it will be broken.

When Jesus Christ joins us to Himself by making our human spirit one with His Spirit, there is introduced another LIFE into our makeup – one that is God-centered, and therefore, totally contrary to the flesh. Thus, the core issue here is not what we DO. The issue is who is our LIFE – to whom do we belong? It is absolutely impossible to walk in the Spirit, let alone walk free of the lusts of the flesh as long as I am seeking to possess myself. I must LOSE my life and find Christ as my life to even get started in this matter. Then I must abide in Christ as my life.

Self-rule is the ground upon which all of the other lusts of the flesh can govern me because self-rule is THE FLESH -- is that old Adam nature. It is from this self-rule that all other sin emerges. But if I lose myself to Christ, then the old life – the ground upon which all the lusts of the flesh are built – will lose power. I will be able to grow to walk in the Spirit of life in Christ.

If we want the lusts of the flesh out of our lives, then we have to LOSE the life from which those lusts draw their power. We can to put on Jesus Christ – in Him that victory is already won – and it is by faith that we enter into it.

Sept 23

The Message of the Cross

The message of the Cross is NOT that I put my faith in the Cross. It is not that I put my faith merely in a WORK Jesus finished two-thousand years ago. The message of the Cross is about the One who died on the Cross and finished that work – my faith is to be in Jesus Christ NOW – faith that will abide in Him as my life.

Jesus Christ IS Christ crucified. Jesus Christ is the Risen Christ. Thus, if we put our faith in the Person of Christ, we are putting our faith in all that He has done. Indeed, today Christ Himself embodies the Truth and power of His death and resurrection.

The death of Jesus Christ ENDED the old creation. His death was our death. When Christ died, all that separated us from God died in Him. But that alone did not make anyone alive. We are indeed, “reconciled to God by the death of His Son” – and any gospel that omits or minimizes the Cross is a false gospel. But we are, “saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) Christianity is CHRIST IN US – now. Christianity is new LIFE.

Sep 24

The Essential of His Life

If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Col. 1:3-4)

Omit or water-down the Truth of the Cross – whether it be the Cross of Christ, or the essential today of the personal Cross -- and you have a false gospel. But there is also a way of turning the Truth of the Cross into the whole of Christianity. Usually where this is done, there is much celebration as to what Christ accomplished on the Cross – and rightly so. But often there is a blindness to Christ Himself – and a failure to recognize what the Cross made possible for each of us: Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Jesus continually said “I AM.....” Paul says, “Christ, who is our life...” (Col. 3:4) Paul travailed, “until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) Paul said, “We are saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) And finally, the root of Christianity is, “Christ in us.” (Col.1:27) All of this was made possible by the death of Christ – and our being personally planted into His death. But the Christian life is ultimately a walk in His resurrection life.

What is a Christian? One in whom Christ dwells. A new creation in Christ Jesus. Yes, one who has been crucified with Christ, and one who is picking up his Cross daily. But all unto HIS LIFE. Paul said, “We are always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest.” Thus, the Cross MUST be preached – Christ crucified is the answer for everything that is outside of Christ. But the bulk of the NT is focused upon the Living Christ who is in us – how to walk with Him and come into the fullness of all that He is.

Sep 25

The Essential of the Cross

The Cross was the end of the old creation, and thus, the end of the Adam race. Through His death and resurrection, Christ has birthed a new race in Himself. Thus, once we neglect or deny the Cross, we open the way for a false Christianity that is built upon and implemented by that old Adam race. Most professing Christians would never directly deny the Cross of Christ. But blindness to, or the refusal of, the personal Cross today, is a denial of Him. It will absolutely keep us on the ground of the old creation.

Much of what is called Christianity today is the result of side-stepping the Truth of the Cross, and thus, NOT living from out of new life in Christ Jesus. Religious people have created another gospel and another Jesus – fueled by the old life. Some of this even appears spiritual – much emotion, supposed signs and wonders, etc. But it is not of Christ. It is of the soul realm of natural man. This is the outcome of any supposed Christianity that minimizes the personal Cross. There is no resurrection life – but only destructive substitutes based upon natural man.

Sep 26

Willing to Do His Will

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)

If we want to know the will of God, we must be willing to do it. Therefore, it is the heart of man – our willingness for God – that will either open the door for light, or keep us in darkness.

There are other ways to say the same thing. If we truly want God and His will, are we willing to say, “Lord, do whatever it takes to bring to pass Your will and purpose in my life.”? In other words, some of us may doubt whether we are willing to abandon ourselves to God, and we may have little idea as to how to do that. But even if we doubt our willingness, we can, “be willing to be willing.” Be willing to allow God to make us willing. This might seem like a very risky prayer, but it is no risk at all. The alternative is a conditional relationship with God, which is really unbelief.

Jesus also said, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22) This is the SAME Truth. Once God takes the initiative to bring us light – that same light will enable us to choose. That choice does not begin by choosing a THING or choosing a PATH. It begins by choosing a PERSON. This is faith – a reliance upon God to be faithful if I am willing to abandon myself to Him.

Sep 27

The Grapes of Eschol

And they came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. (Num. 13:23)

Jesus Christ is our inheritance. But there is a huge difference between spying out Christ and actually giving ourselves to Him. There is an immense difference between eating the grapes of Eschol, and actually entering the land by faith and living there.

God’s light is UNTO salvation. Light is conviction of the Truth so that we might have a choice before us -- between that light and the darkness. But note that light is NOT salvation at that point for the unsaved -- light that is given does not equal light that is embraced for the saved. No. Those, “who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift...” (Heb. 6:4-6), are not those who were saved, but lost their salvation. No. They were enlightened and tasted, but refused salvation, or what God had for them. You must have some light to be accountable for refusing it. This is a certainty taught all through the Word of God. God beckons us to, “taste and see that the Lord is good,” but to be saved, we must, “eat and drink,” of Christ – that is, He must live in us.

Sep 28

The Perfecting of the Saints

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints...(Eph. 4:12)

The KJV often uses the word, “perfect,” or, “perfecting,” in a way that is today outdated. No one will ever be perfected on this age. The Greek word in this verse, which occurs nowhere else in the NT, actually means, “the setting of a bone in place for the purpose of mending.” See also Heb. 12:12 for a similar picture.

If a bone needs to be set in place so that it can mend, then that is only because it is already OUT of place. Thus, the purpose of ministry is to discern this and set it back in place. But what does it mean for ministry to set the spiritual bones of the Body of Christ back in place? Colossians 2:19 tells us the problem that this will correct: “And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Believers in Christ are out of place when they are not, “holding fast to the Head.” They are not individually and personally living from out of Christ, walking with Him, picking up their Cross daily, looking to Him alone as their personal Mediator unto God. Thus, it is the job of ministry to get those folks back into adjustment with Jesus Christ as individuals – which will result in the Body being brought back into place under Him as the Head.

You will note the suggestion in this picture – the entire Body is not adjusted to compensate for a bone that is out of place. No, the bone must be put back in place. In short, ministry is to individuals, that they might hold fast to Christ. Then, if they do, the collective individuals that are holding fast to the Head will comprise a healthy body.

Sep 29

The Unity of The Faith

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13)

One of the tenets of the modern latter rain movement is based on the phrase, “till we come in the unity of the faith.” Their error is to take this as a promise that all will unite in Christ – under modern day apostles and prophets. Indeed, they say Jesus cannot return until we do. This is not what the verse is teaching.

First of all, Paul does not say, “unity of faith.” No. He says, “unity of THE faith.” In other words, the only real unity is unity in Jesus Christ; in the true knowledge of Him. All other unity is unity in error. Secondly, this unity will not be achieved through the unity of believers with each other – but through the unity of each believer to Christ Himself, which is the only basis for unity with each other. That can happen if there is only one believer united with Christ. Thus, this is already being fulfilled – without the need of a movement, or imposition by law.

Sep 30

Every Wind of Doctrine

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. 4:13-14)

The reason believers remain children who are easily swayed and taken in by every new teaching that comes along is stated in this passage: There is no knowledge of the Son of God. The only means by which we can discern error is if we know the Person who is the Truth. If we don't know the genuine article, we will never recognize the counterfeit when it comes along. That is why it is the job of ministry to preach the Truth of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) The purpose of God is to, "form Christ in us." (Gal. 4:19) This is what Paul is talking about in this passage. But today many believers have never once heard about, "Christ in us." Many are completely blind to what it means for Christ to be formed in us. Thus, they are easily swayed by some new angle that makes them feel closer to God, or that makes them feel good about themselves. You have, "seeker friendly churches," "purpose driven churches," "contemplative prayer," "getting back to our Jewish roots," and whole movements like Word of Faith. Challenge these and you will be labeled a negative trouble-maker. But if we realized that Christianity is Christ in us, and began to know Him, all of these would be exposed for the error they are. The Truth in Him is the solution for these problems.

Oct 1

Learning Christ

But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. (Eph. 4:20-21)

Some professing Christians are like walking encyclopedias of the Bible. They practically have it memorized. Yes, it is great to know scripture. But some of those same folks are, "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (II Tim. 3:7) It is possible to learn all of the doctrines about Jesus Christ right from the Bible, but to never LEARN CHRIST.

Do we realize that Satan knows every fact and every doctrine found in the Bible? What good has it done him? None. The point is this: To LEARN CHRIST is to, yes, possess facts and doctrines in complete agreement with scripture. But to truly LEARN CHRIST we must have an inward revelation of HIM. God wants to form Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19) And He wants us to be, "formed together with Him." (Rom. 8:29) This is what it means to LEARN CHRIST. It is what it means to come into a knowledge of Him that will fully agree with scripture.

Oct 2

Taught by God

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

The Greek words translated, “teach,” in this verse, carries the meaning, not only of conveying information to the one taught, but carries the meaning of SHAPING the one taught by what is conveyed. In other words, to know the Truth means to BE MADE TRUE unto God – because we know Christ. To know Christ means He is formed in us, and we are then formed together with Him. But the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ is not merely intellectual knowledge. It is a REALIZATION of the Person of Christ, who dwells in us, in a way that adjusts and shapes us to HIMSELF.

This shaping through an ongoing revelation of Christ IN US is the work of the Spirit of God. Paul said, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (II Cor. 3:17-18) If we truly see Jesus Christ, and we are open to what we see, we will be shaped by what we see. We will be transformed so that we can manifest Him.

Oct 3

Itching Ears

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II Tim. 4:3-4)

If I have been deceived, there are REASONS – there are reasons why people believe error rather than the Truth. And it is a fact that those reasons are found in our own hearts. Only through knowing Jesus Christ and giving ourselves to Him can our heart be made pure, and can it be possible for us to avoid deception, and know Truth.

God holds us responsible for the light given to us – He holds us responsible for turning to Him. There are many people who have no light; no knowledge of Christ. They are unable to believe the Truth because they have yet to be given light. These people are truly blind or ignorant. But this passage is not describing ignorant people who cannot believe. Rather, it is describing people who could believe but refuse to believe. They have enough light to at least turn to God for Truth. But instead, they turn to what satisfies something in their own heart.

God tells us, once He gives us light, to simply turn to Him – to come into the Light. That is faith; it is where anyone who has light can begin. But many have, “turned their ears from the Truth.” Refuse light and you get darkness. Refuse truth and you will live in error. You may even embrace ridiculous fables as if they are Biblical Truth.

Oct 4

Believing Fables

They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II Tim. 4:4)

There was once a girl who had at least a foundational knowledge of the Truth in Christ. She knew enough to at least turn to God and seek Him. Then, at some point in her life, she went through a great emotional trauma. But instead of seeking God for His will; for Truth, she got entangled in the writings of false teacher. This false teacher claimed he had been visited by angels and the Lord Himself. He also claimed that he was the only source of true Christianity. His writings were complete fables at best, and right from the spirit of the enemy at worst. But his writings made this girl feel good about herself and about God. They made her seem right in her situation and everyone else wrong. Thus, no longer did she feel guilty and lost. She felt enriched and healed. She thought she found THE answer.

Can error do that to a person? Absolutely it can. No one is deceived by error unless the error satisfies something in them – error will always fill some religious void. The problem is, ANYTHING – no matter how good or bad it might seem – anything other than Jesus Christ Himself will bring us into bondage. Why? Because anything other than Christ is ERROR.

Jesus Christ promised to guide His people into all Truth – into a knowledge of Himself. But He won't force us. He will give us enough light so we will at least know to TURN. But in the end, we are either going to turn to God and be adjusted to HIM, or we are going to adjust God to fit ourselves. It is possible to do the latter and think you are happy. But you will be living, not in Christ, but in a religious fable. We need not be deceived by fables. We can turn back to God for the Truth at any time.

Oct 5

Our Redemptive God

If we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself. (II Tim. 2:13)

This is an encouraging verse because it shows that the faithfulness of God to us is not dependent upon US. It is dependent upon Him. In short, God is always the same towards us, even if we are never the same towards Him. Thankfully, God will never react as a man does towards us. He will never deny – depart from – His purpose or His own character. That means that no matter what we have done, the intent and purpose of God towards us is the same. We can turn back to Him through His Son.

If we stray into darkness through unbelief, the goal of God will always remain the same – to guide us back into the Truth. If we slip into unbelief, the goal of God will be to restore our faith. God is a redemptive God. There are always new beginning in Christ.

Oct 6

The Futility of the Flesh

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. 2:3)

Man without Christ is at the mercy of his fallen nature – he must, “make do,” with the resources found in himself. Each of us has a different version of the flesh – formed over our lifetime by our family, upbringing, temperament, and our own choices. But in the end, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6) And flesh is all it will ever be.

The only solution and deliverance is CHRIST IN US. But even if Christ dwells in us, we have these possibilities of the flesh. Being joined to the Lord in spirit does not obliterate the flesh. Christ is simply joined to us, and there is then a separation between our flesh and His Spirit -- and the warfare begins.

How is it possible to know what is of Christ vs. what is of us – that is, what is of our natural make-up? The solution is NOT to develop a, “how-to list,” for being able to discern what is of God, and what is of us. No. The solution is to know Jesus Christ.

If we are abandoning ourselves to Christ He will be formed in us. We will come into a realization of Him; a knowledge of Him. And this will make it clear to us what is of our soul, and what is of His spirit – this is the separation between soul and Spirit within us. He is the LIGHT and He is the Truth, and all things are known only if we know HIM.

Oct 7

Words of Spirit and Life

The disciples said, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”...Jesus said, “It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. (Jn. 6:60-64)

All through the ministry of Jesus, He spoke to His disciples of spiritual Truth, and they interpreted Him on a natural level. This was not because they were stupid or uneducated. No. It was because they were not yet born from above – the Spirit of God was not yet IN THEM to quicken. It was not until Jesus ascended to heaven, and came back down through the Spirit to dwell in them that they understood much of anything. Jesus directly told them that the Spirit had been WITH them, but was not yet IN them. (John 14:17) Their lack of discernment shows that a person could actually be in the physical presence of Christ Himself, and yet still not understand, because they are not yet born from above. Such is the essential of Christ within through the Spirit of God.

Why do people fail to understand God, misinterpret God, or live in confusion? Sometimes it is rebellion. Often inexperience or ignorance. But often people simply need to be born from above to be able to see. (Jn. 3:3)

Oct 8

Wrestling With God

**Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
(Gen. 32:24)**

Jacob was promised his inheritance from God. But he did not abandon himself to God and allow God to bring it to pass. He represents ourselves – and the efforts of religious flesh – not to directly rebel against God – but to try to wrestle from God what God has already freely given.

God has made many promises in His Word. It is good and right for us to believe Him. But if we are continually trying to wrestle out of God what He has promised to freely give, then we don't really trust Him to keep His Word without our wrestling.

Abraham basically committed the same error. He believed God for Isaac. But then erred a number of times trying to make sure the promise would come to pass – the worst error of which was to birth Ismael. Abraham came into full faith only once he offered back to God the very son God had promised. Abraham relinquished ownership over the fulfilled promise and fully surrendered it to God.

God not only wants to give us promises – He wants to give us a relationship with Himself. In short, we ought to never separate the promises of God from the One who gave them. Believe God for His promises. But realize that all of the promises of God are meant to be realized through a relationship with Him through Christ.

Oct 9

Fitted Into the Inheritance

**Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
(Gen. 32:24)**

Jacob is a type of religious, natural man – who tries to wrestle from God what is already freely given in Christ. Often we focus upon the PROMISES and THINGS that are freely given in Christ. God has promised them and we want them. But God first focuses upon US. Jesus said we must LOSE our lives in order to find true life in HIM. Until we are in the process of doing this, we cannot receive what God has given – we cannot receive them because we still own ourselves – we are living from out of the OLD LIFE. The promises of God are all IN CHRIST – we have to find HIM – and must have Christ as our life -- and if we do, we will find the promises.

Thus, we have a great irony: We want to wrestle the promises from God and save them for ourselves into our old life. But God tells us to LOSE our lives – by faith – in order to find the promises that are freely given in Christ.

Oct 10

The Yes and Amen

For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (II Cor. 1:20)

All the promises of God are found in Jesus Christ. Thus, we cannot separate the promises that are IN Christ FROM Christ. In other words, God is not going to give us the fulfilled promises to the disregard of the Christ who is in us. Rather, it is as Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19) that the promises that are in Him emerge into our experience. If we lose our lives and find Christ as our life (Matt. 16:24-25, Col. 2:3) then we will find the promises that are IN Christ as we find Christ as our life.

God has given us all things freely IN HIS SON. (Rom. 8:32, Eph. 1:3) But this also means that He has ultimately given us nothing through any other means. Even when God does bless people otherwise, He does so to with the intent of leading them TO Christ as their life.

If I am saved, I am joined to the Lord. I am one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) I am therefore joined to the One in whom are all of the promises. Thus, can we see the folly of trying to wrestle from God – on the basis of our natural man; on the basis of something about US – the promises He has already freely given in Christ? No. I have to LOSE myself in order to find the One in whom are the promises. This explains much as to why God works the way He does in the life of the believer.

Oct 11

Letting Go to God

Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. (Gen. 32:24-25)

Jacob would not let go – he would not abandon himself, or lose himself to God by faith. He relied on his natural strength. So God broke his natural strength. For us, this means that God will NEVER allow our natural man to succeed in wrestling from out of Him what He has already freely given in Christ. He will NEVER give us anything on the basis of ourselves. Rather, God will allow this to prove to be futile. He will cripple our natural man – expose us as weak and empty. For it is only when we learn by experience that there is no hope in ourselves that we will REST in Christ and receive by faith what God has freely given to us in His Son.

God will allow whatever it takes to bring us to the end of our rope. And when we come to the end of our rope, God is not going to give us the strength to grip our rope tighter. No. He wants us to LET GO of our rope – to God. God wants to cripple our natural man to the point where we no longer try to walk with Him on that basis. And then if we are made weak, then Christ in us can BE our strength.

Oct 12

Victory From Surrender

And he said unto him, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince has thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed. (Gen. 32:27-28)

Jacob never prevailed OVER God. No. Jacob prevailed WITH God because Jacob surrendered TO God. All overcoming is solely the result of being overcome by Jesus Christ – we only sit with Him in His throne to the extent that He is Lord of our lives. We are never called upon to win any victory in the Christian life. Faith is a rest in His victory – a stand by faith – in the victory already finished in Christ.

We find in the story of Jacob the reasons why the promises of God do not seem to come to pass for God's people. We are trying to wrestle out of God what He has freely given solely in Christ. But the problem is not a wrong theology. It is not the wrong religious practice. We do not need a better, "how-to," list. The problem is US. What we need is faith. We need to, "let go and let God," by losing ourselves to Him.

In Christ are all the promises, and thus, victory over all, and the receiving of His promises, are always through surrender TO God. Jacob tried to wrestle the inheritance from God through every means possible for decades – culminating with this event in Genesis 32. But the problem was never with God. It was with Jacob. As long as Jacob was in unbelief he could not receive or live in the promises of God. But once his strength was broken, he was then able to be fitted into those promises because he was rightly related to God.

Oct 13

Faith is Never a Mistake

When God delivered Israel from Egypt and took them out into the wilderness, they were unable to care for themselves – and God did allow them to go through seasons of lack. Over and over again, they accused God of leading them out only to abandon them. In effect, they were saying that their faith in God was a mistake. And now that they had made that mistake, there was no way back.

When we make choices of faith in God we are apt to assume that it is going to immediately result in blessing. But often the opposite happens – and if it does then it is easy to assume that we have made a mistake to trust God. But faith in God is never a mistake. What should we do – NOT trust Him? When our faith in God seems to be a mistake, God is simply using the trial as the means to lead us into a greater revelation of Himself. God won't forget about our needs. But knowing Him is the greatest need.

God wants to form Christ in us. He will use circumstances as tools. God will get around to working out His will in circumstances. In the meantime God wants us to trust Him. If we do, He will override any mistakes of judgment. But our faith itself is never a mistake. It is exactly what God wants.

Oct 14

Called According to His Purpose

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:28-29)

The better translation of this verse should be, “God works good into all things for those who are called according to His purpose.” And that purpose is that we might, “be formed together with His Son.”

We are being told that the purpose for which God works good into all things is to form us together with His Son. We might even say that His purpose IS the good that God will work into all things. Contrast this over and against the common notion that God works all things together for good – because He simply wants circumstances to go well for us. No. Circumstances will not always go well for us. But God is working His good into and through them – that if we yield to Him Christ might be formed in us.

God’s purpose is stated in this passage, and we are being told that this purpose IS the good that God is working on – into ALL THINGS. Thus, God does fully care about our temporal lives and our needs, and He will work the good of His purpose into them. They will not be unrelated to that purpose, but included, as both the means and the result. There is nothing God does in the Christian life that is unrelated to Jesus Christ.

Oct 15

Galilee or Bethlehem?

Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Shall Christ come out of Galilee?” Has not the scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? (John 7:41-42)

Many who heard Jesus rejected Him as Messiah because He was from Galilee. Yes, they rightly said that the Messiah had to come from out of Bethlehem. But there was one fact they didn’t know: Jesus did come from Bethlehem. He was born there.

There are many people who reject a Christ they have created in their own mind – one created on the basis of their imagination, lies, and false assumptions. They are rejecting a false Christ – one born in Galilee – rather than the true Christ born in Bethlehem. Are they accountable? Yes, although it is up to God as to the depth. Even if we have our facts wrong, God is still able to bring light into our world. And when He does we are at least accountable for continuing to seek God for the Truth. Those who heard Jesus were looking at the Son of God Incarnate -- a sinless man who spoke God’s own Truth, and worked many miracles. Was all of this rightly dismissed because they thought He came out of Galilee? No. They could have sought Him further for the Truth. God is always more willing to show us the Truth than we are to receive it.

Oct 16

The Carpenter's Son

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. 13:54-56)

Accounts like this one tell us that for the first 30 years of His life, Jesus maintained a low profile – He did not teach and He did no miracles. He simply lived the routine life of the carpenter's Son. But it was a sinless life to God's glory – indeed those 30 years in obscurity prepared Him for, not only His ministry, but for the work of eternal Redemption. The life of Jesus was, in fact, so normal-looking, that those among whom He lived for those 30 years were utterly astonished – some were offended – that He would now begin to teach and refer to Himself as the Son of God.

Do we think that the only way in which God can achieve His purpose in us is if we are living some dramatic life? That we need to be in ministry? To be used of God to build churches? To heal the sick? To convert thousands? That we need to see signs and wonders? None of these things were necessary for Jesus, the Son of God. He developed His relationship with His Father by being the carpenter's son.

The key here is to see that what God is doing in us through Christ is not merely for this age. Ultimately, it is for the ages to come. Thus, whether God uses me in a big way, or simply lets me live a rather mundane life, the issue is whether Christ is being formed in me. Everything that USES to form Christ in me will pass into history. But what will remain and be taken into the ages to come is that which is OF CHRIST.

Oct 17

The Hard Saying

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? (John 6:58-60)

There were many things that Jesus said and did that offended people. He simply did not satisfy their expectations of a Messiah. But in John 6 He claimed to be God Incarnate. His words, "I am the Bread that CAME DOWN from heaven," are inescapable. He was saying that HE CAME DOWN FROM GOD into this world from the outside of this world. He was saying that He existed before He was born

There are many teachings that, "thin the crowd" -- of those who follow Jesus. But all of them have a common denominator: Jesus is God. It is upon the identity of Jesus as God that the entirety of the Redemption stands or falls: "Who do you say that I am?"

Oct 18

Jesus is God

Most cults that claim to be Christian have common traits. Most of them claim that the truth they have received from God is unique to them -- no one else has received it. Indeed, it is common for these groups to claim that God has chosen them to restore true Christianity. As a result, they are the only true church – and so you must join them to be right with God and enter into the Truth. Often this supposed Truth originally came from God to one person. It was conveyed through an angel, vision, or directly from God. This nonsense usually forms the basis of most cult like groups.

Every cult will also share one foundational error: The identity of Jesus Christ – included in which must be the purpose for which He came. If that purpose is wrong then we are talking about another Jesus and another gospel. They will say Jesus was a good man sent by God – to show us how to live. They might even say that Jesus was the Son of God, but that He did not die for sin, but to show us God's love. In one way or another, Satan desires to lie about the identity of Jesus and the essentials of why He came.

The two events in Jesus' human life that people most often reject are the virgin birth and the resurrection. This is because BOTH prove is He God. You cannot deny either one if you believe the true gospel or true Jesus Christ. And you don't have to belong to a cult to deny Christ. You will stand or fall upon your personal faith.

Oct 19

All Things Are From Out of God

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God. (II Cor. 5:17-18)

When Paul said, "All things – of the new creature in Christ – are of God," he used Greek words that could have been translated, "all things are from out of God." A new creature in Christ is what is born from above when Jesus Christ joins Himself to us – His Spirit to our human spirit. HE makes us a new creature – not because of anything contributed by ourselves – but because of our oneness with HIM. All that is contained in new life from above is FROM OUT OF GOD through Christ.

This is important to see because if, "all things," that speak of new life in Christ are, "from out of God," then despite being joined in resurrection union with Christ, nothing is from out from US – that is, our old nature. He is the Treasure – all of it. We are the earthen vessel, or the recipient of the Treasure.

Most Christians define their Christian life by what they have given to God. But true Christianity is defined by what we have RECEIVED – Christ in us. ALL things are out from God – Jesus Christ IS our life. (Col. 3:4)

Oct 20

Ziklag

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. (I Sam. 30:1-2)

David had been told he would be king, and yet he had spent years in the desert fleeing from Saul. But he had been given the city of Ziklag. Ziklag was the last refuge of David. Everything he had was at Ziklag.

David and his army had left Ziklag to fight with the Philistines, but David was sent home to Ziklag. When he got there he found that Ziklag was burned – and all of their families and all of their possessions were taken captive.

David and his men, “lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.” David Himself was, “greatly distressed,” because added to all of this, his own people, “spoke of stoning him.” It would have been easy for David to accuse God, or to assume God had forsaken him. Ziklag was everything David had. Now it was gone. Where would David go from here?

It says, “David encouraged himself in the LORD.” Thus, despite the present distress, we can step outside of it and put our faith in God. Once David did, it says, “David recovered all...there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great...David recovered all.” And little did he know that within three days Saul would be dead and he would finally take his place as king.

There are many lesson in this – the chief one pertaining to spiritual life in Christ. When all that we are – and all that we have – is burned to the ground, there is still the Lord. He is not moved. God may, in fact, allow us to suffer the loss of everything about ourselves in which we have put faith – so that we might learn the Truth of faith in Christ.

Oct 21

A Spiritual Union

For he has made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Cor. 5:21)

When Jesus died on the Cross, He BORE the very nature or body of sin of the Adam race. He was, “made to be,” this sin in the sense of bearing US in a supernatural way.

Christ made us one with Himself – that we might become one with Him. We were, “planted into,” His death, that we might be raised in Him. Have we recognized that Christianity is CHRIST IN US? That we are joined to the Lord and are one spirit with Him? This is not religion. It is resurrection union with God Himself.

Oct 22

The Word of Reconciliation

And all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:18-19)

The phrase, “has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” ought to read, “has LODGED in us the word of reconciliation.” This is not just a message with words -- Christ in us is that Word – is He not the basis of all reconciliation to God?

Jesus Christ is the One Mediator between God and man – His Person is the means by which we are reconciled to God. If we are in Christ, and Christ is in God, then we are, through Christ, in God. That is a living reconciliation.

Note that God never needed to be reconciled back to man – rather, man needed to be reconciled back to God. Through the death of Christ, every human being who will ever live HAS ALREADY been reconciled. But that simply took away the sin of the world – removed all sin that was between God and man. It is not yet LIFE. It is only if a person renounces their old live through repentance, and comes to Christ by faith, that they are in Christ – and thus saved by His life. (Rom. 5:10) And because Christ has already reconciled the entire human race to God, this is also why, if someone is convicted of this Truth, they are condemned if they refuse. Christ has already done all there is to do to reconcile us to God. But we must believe and enter in or it will do us no good.

Oct 23

Marks of True Ministry

Therefore seeing we have this ministry....but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (II Cor. 4:1-2)

Gather up what is stated in this verse and it is clear that true ministry is never to be used for self-gain – neither materially, or for pride, or for any of man’s goals. True ministry is HIS LIFE ministered to others. It is the manifestation of the Truth in Christ. This Truth and life does not belong to any of us. It is of Christ – and ministers are to be faithful stewards of God. (I Cor. 4:1)

The outcome of true ministry ought to be that Jesus Christ Himself is being formed in people and seen in them – the ministry is an instrument of edification unto that end. True ministry is HIS LIFE being manifested through the minister – and where His life is at work, there can be no place for these works of darkness.

Oct 24

Then Face to Face

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (I Cor. 13:12)

The glass through which we, “see darkly,” is natural man. Not necessarily sinful man, but natural man. Even though Christ dwells in the believer, and this equips us with the capacity to grow to see Jesus Christ, in this age, and in this body, we will never be completely free from the natural. In one way or another, we will see through this glass darkly.

That last phrase says it all: “Then I shall know even as also I am known.” During this age, there are times when I cannot see God. There are other times when I do not see Him clearly. But regardless, God sees me. Right now, I am known by God. We are being told that there will come a point at which all of the natural will be transformed and we will know God and His Son, Jesus Christ, face to face – we will know God as He already knows us.

Little children will often cover their eyes if they are shy – somehow they think that if they cannot see you, that you cannot see them. But note: In their innocent attempt to keep you from seeing them, they block their ability to see you. It is like this with God – if we think we are keeping Him from seeing us we are only blocking our own ability to see Him. This is why coming into the light and confessing our sin and need is vital – if we open ourselves to God it does nothing to help Him see us. But it makes it possible for us to see Him. There will always be limitations in this age. But God wants us to open to Him NOW, for it is His will for us to see Him THEN, face to face.

Oct 25

Seeing Him As He Is

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

The verse could be paraphrased, “It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is.” This is based on the original Greek (Vincent), and affirmaton from other passages. It is an awesome thought. If you think about this, it means that what will be manifested is the new creature that we are in Christ – Christ FULLY manifested through us -- without the limits of the natural.

This is the same Truth as found in I Cor. 13:12: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” And in I Cor. 2:9, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Oct 26

Love One Another

This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. (Jn. 15:12)

What is the AGAPE love of God? It is an unconditional commitment to God's highest for the one loved, regardless of cost to them, or to us. It is fully Christ centered – a desire and commitment for others equal to God's desire and commitment for them.

It is not possible to love another person with the agape love of God unless I am growing to realize the love of God for me personally. The love of God is solely from out of God to us -- and then through us to others. Love is a FRUIT of the Spirit of God. It is the result of personally abiding in Christ. Only if we personally receive His love can we love Him, and then, love others. We are not the source of the love of God. At the root, it is not emotional. It is not theological. It is not merely outward. Rather, the root is the life of Christ in us – realized and received.

There is something that happens once a person comes into a realization of Jesus Christ: They are set free by love. Thus, they want the same for everyone else. Because they know that they have been freely given by grace a priceless relationship with God, they are able to freely, and without strings attached, desire this for others.

Jesus said we were to love others AS He has loved us. That is impossible if we try to call upon the resources of natural life. No. It is possible only if it is the outcome of His life and love IN US – free to flow through us unto others.

Oct 27

Love as Evidence

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. (1 John 3:14)

John is not saying that if we love others, that this will enable us to pass from death to life. Nonsense. Rather, he is saying that if we love others – with the REAL love of God in Christ Jesus – that such love is EVIDENCE that we have already passed from death to life. The capacity to love with the love of God is in HIS LIFE – and it is only if Christ is in us, and we have realized His love for us, that we can truly love others.

Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) But the LIFE that emerges from Christ in us, if a person is walking with Christ, is HIS LIFE. As Christ is, "formed in us" (Gal. 4:19), and we come into a realization of Him, we will be, "formed together with Him." (Rom. 8:29) This is result is us becoming living evidence of His life – His witnesses. And the dominant characteristic of the life of Christ being manifested through a person is the love of God – not human love – but a love that is FROM OUT OF CHRIST through a person unto others. And that love will always be committed to GOD'S highest for all.

Oct 28

Unfeigned Love

Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently. (1 Pet 1:22)

The, “love of the brethren,” is the outcome of something – i.e., love is one of the FRUITS of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23) More specifically, it is the outcome of having, “purified your soul in obeying the Truth through the Spirit.” That is wordy, but essentially, as we realize the Truth in Christ and embrace Him, we will be MADE TRUE UNTO GOD – and this results in a pure heart through which the love of Christ can flow.

Note that Peter uses the term, “unfeigned love.” The word here is PRETENTIOUS. His point being, that among Christians, where there is not real love, then fake love will fill the void – because well, people know they are supposed to love others. But in the Body of Christ, a fake love is always from out of natural, religious man, as the source, rather than from out of Christ through us as a fruit.

God has given us all things freely IN CHRIST. He has given us NOTHING outside of Christ. And Christ is to BE our life. Thus, if we are to love others, or manifest anything at all that is of God, we must ABIDE IN CHRIST – which means to live FROM OUT OF HIM for all. Then the fruit of the Spirit will be there – not because we tried hard to produce it, and not because we are faking it – but because Christ is being manifested.

Oct 29

Feigned Love

Where Christ is not the Vine the fruit of Christ will be absent – and the void will be filled with the best that religious natural man can produce from out of himself. Every cult, every false teacher, and every heretical group, claim they love. But they do not love with the love of God – but with a feigned earthly, soulish, and destructive control.

Agape love always desires that others be set free unto Christ for themselves. Often, earthly love seeks to control others FOR Christ – although such will be portrayed as, “wanting only the best,” for others. To seek to control others FOR Christ is nothing more than a desire to control them for MYSELF – I am not free and so I will seek to make them in my image – as an affirmation of myself. One of the earmarks of earthly love is that when it is not received there is animosity – because there is no payback of gratitude. But when the love of God is not received, there is, well, there is still love. Thank be to God that when we do not receive His love He still loves us.

Real love is rooted in fellowship in Christ. Christ glues together Christians. Feigned love is a mask that covers up fake glue: A list of laws, submission to authority, personal preferences, fear, etc. Thus, once the real glue is dissolved, there is no unity in Christ at all. For everything has been exposed for the religious façade that it is.

Oct 30

Gifts vs. Fruits

Spiritual gifts are GIVEN. Spiritual fruits are the outcome of a growth process. But both are of Jesus Christ. Neither are of natural man.

Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of edification in Christ. Spiritual fruits are the outcome of edification in Christ. Both the gifts and the fruits are HIS LIFE through His Spirit. Or to put it another way, the gifts are the "plant," food, and the fruits are the growth, which in turn, produces a greater maturity of gifts unto a greater maturity of growth, etc. In this there is a continual working of God in many cycles of growth.

All spiritual gifts that are of the Spirit of Truth will tell the Truth about Jesus Christ. Any supposed spiritual gift that in any way misrepresents Jesus Christ – whether it be in word, action, manifestation, or direction – is not of God. It does not matter how supernatural it seems, or how moved people are over it. Agreement in error; excitement over error – this cannot make error the Truth. Again – the purpose for which God has given the gifts of the Spirit is to edify the church in Christ – to build members IN HIM. (Eph. 4:4) If this is not happening, then what is happening is not of God.

All true spiritual fruit will manifest Jesus Christ. The fruit that comes from a branch abiding in the Vine is of not of the branch, but is of the life of the Vine.

According to Jesus, all of the work of the Holy Spirit will be unto a revelation of Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us. There is much that passes today for spiritual fruit, or spiritual gifts, which are wholly of natural man. The foundational Truth of, "Christ in us, the hope of glory," has been replaced with an earthly substitute that appears spiritual.

Oct 31

God's Love in the Redemption

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

The fact that God's love for us was manifested through His Redemption in Christ shatters two falsehoods. First, it shatters the core of Calvinism. Calvinism teaches limited Atonement – saying that Christ died only for, "the elect," and never intended to die for the non-elect. But if God manifested His love by sending Christ to die for, "the elect," then what did God manifest towards those for whom Christ did NOT die? Are we to believe, this being the case, that God so loved the non-elect that He did NOT send Christ for them? God IS love and is no respecter of persons. Calvinism is an amazing blindness to God, and a terrible misrepresentation of His nature and character.

Secondly, it exposes as error the notion that Christ died in order to save man from God's wrath. No. God's sent Christ to save man from sin. "For God so loved the world that He gave..." not, "for God was so mad at the world that He gave..." Again – love.

Nov 1

Does God Harden the Heart?

He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. (Rom 9:18)

We are accountable before God only for the light and Truth that He gives us. But make no question about it – we ARE accountable for the light given. Once we see the Truth, we cannot ever be the same ever again – we will either receive it and be set free, or we will harden our hearts against it and be in greater darkness. We cannot go back.

This principle explains much – and clears up some confusion in a number of cases in scripture. For example, the Bible says, “God hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” (Ex. 9:12) This statement, and the discussion in Romans 9, have been used to try to prove the false doctrine of unconditional election – that God elects many to damnation, and thus, wills the hardening of their hearts. No.

God desires that all men be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. (I Tim. 2:4) But if a person, like Pharaoh, continually refuses that light, his heart will become hardened against God. But this does not mean that God will stop trying to convict that person. Rather, God will keep convicting, and keep bringing light and Truth. In a sense, it can be said that God is hardening them, because God will not stop convicting them even if He knows they will harden themselves. What else is God to do? There is only ONE TRUTH and ONE WAY. God’s ONE purpose is unto that end for that person, even if they spend a lifetime hardening themselves against Him.

The Truth that God intends to set us free will judge us if we refuse. The grace He intends to soften our heart will act as the agent that hardens them – if we refuse. Indeed, final condemnation is the result of a continual refusal of the Truth that God brings. What is the solution, that He not bring it? No. God is going to push and push until each person decides one way or another. There is not going to be any fence-sitting. Thus, God brings the Truth. But He doesn’t choose. We must choose.

Nov 2

Pharaoh and Judas

For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (Rom 9:17)

Is God unjust to give light to those whom He knows will refuse it? Pharaoh or Judas may have claimed they would have never been able to refuse light had God not given them light. But God has only one purpose for us all. Thus, He must give light regardless of what He knows we will choose. Christ died for all and it is through Him alone we are saved. Thus, God must reveal to all His Son. We are accountable even though God knows ahead of time what our choice will be.

Nov 3

About Extrabiblical Revelation

From a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim 3:15-16)

Knowing what the Bible says – that alone cannot save us. Indeed, it cannot form Christ in us. But the Bible can make us, “wise unto salvation” – directing us to, “faith which is in Christ Jesus.” There are Christian folks who are under the delusion that if they know all the right doctrines that this will make them right with God. There are those who think that if they learn teachings about Christ that this is equal to learning Christ Himself. But Paul, within the great epistle to the Ephesians, which contains much teaching about the eternal purpose of God, and the Body of Christ, does not tell them that the key for them is to memorize his epistle and form from it a statement of faith. Instead he tells them, “I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (Eph 1:16-18) In short, Paul wanted them to read what he wrote. But he knew only God could show them what it meant through an inward revelation of His Son. This is not extrabiblical revelation. It is revelation that the Bible itself tells us God wants to give us.

More and more people today are claiming extrabiblical revelation. Some of it is preposterous, and some is demonic. But there is no revelation God will ever give, and nothing that He will ever do, that is not in the Bible – at least in principle. Thus, even though Paul is here talking about revelation from God to a person, that revelation is fully at one with what is found in His Word.

Nov 4

The Baptism of John

For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5)

There are a number of times in the NT where the baptism of John is contrasted against the baptism with the Holy Spirit – thus, they are not the same. John’s was a baptism under the Old Covenant for the remission of sins – in anticipation of the One who was yet to come. Jesus said until He ascended that the Spirit of God would never be IN anyone, but only WITH them – and thus we see that John’s baptism was not unto the new birth. It was after the ascension, in Acts 2, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place for the first time. The baptism with the Holy Spirit IS the baptism into Christ – through which Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer, and the believer comes under the power of all that Jesus is, and all that Jesus has done.

Nov 5

Is the Kingdom Taken by Force?

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. (Matt. 11:11-13)

The kingdom of God is the rule of God. It is not a place over which God rules, but is the rule of God itself. Jesus is the King. Today His life is in us – and all that He governs in us and through us is His kingdom.

This is a much misunderstood passage, mostly because we have assumed that to, “take the kingdom by force,” is a good thing. But the kingdom of God cannot be taken by force. It is cannot be TAKEN at all. It is RECEIVED solely by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. You will note that the time frame wherein people were trying to take the kingdom by force was, “from days of John the Baptist until now.” Thus, these attempts were entirely BEFORE Jesus died, was raised, and ascended. Jesus is not talking about those who are born from above. He was referring to all of the human effort to bring to pass God’s kingdom.

To take any kingdom by force means you must overthrow and defeat the King of that kingdom. But who is the King of the kingdom OF God? Jesus. You would therefore have to overthrow Him to take the kingdom by force. In short, this is not a good thing, but a terrible thing. Thus, rather than try to take the kingdom of God by force, people are supposed to surrender to Christ and His kingdom.

Nov 6

Crossing the Jordan

Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passes over before you into Jordan....As soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap. (Josh 3:11,13)

Israel came OUT of Egypt through a body of water. The parting of the Red Sea required a miracle. There was no other escape for them. Israel also entered INTO the promised land through a body of water. But although the parting of the Jordan was a miracle, they could have crossed over the Jordan easily without a miracle. The Jordan was not that wide. But God forbade it. Crossing the Jordan had to be by HIS hand.

God is showing us that He must lead us into the inheritance, that is, it is by His working in us through Christ that we are in the inheritance. But it is also possible to enter into the land, and try to live in there, through human effort. We can try to take possession of the things of God for ourselves through unbelief. The story of Israel shows that entering the land without the Lord ends in defeat and deception.

Nov 7

Faith Unto Trouble

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall you encamp by the sea.
(Exo 14:2)

On the morning that Israel departed from Egypt, Pharaoh pursued them and trapped them by the Red Sea. They had no way out. Often lost in this story is the fact that they found themselves in this impossible situation – one that required a miracle of God. But they got into this trouble – NOT through disobedience, but through obedience. God had given them specific instructions as to where to encamp and they had obeyed Him.

Faith in God will very often lead us into such situations. We will obey Him thinking that it will help us avoid trouble. Yet often obedience to God guarantees trouble. God will lead us into situations that are too much for us. But He does this so that we might lose ourselves to Him in faith.

There is an obvious difference between trouble that is the result of disobedience and trouble that is the result of obedience. But the solution to both is the same – turn to God by faith. Paul said, “For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” (2 Cor 1:8-9)

Nov 8

The Solution for the Impossible

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (Ex. 14:13-14)

What are God’s instructions to His people in an impossible situation? “Fear not, stand still, see salvation, and then move forward.” We, “fear not,” by believing and trusting the Lord. We, “stand still,” in that faith against all the might come against it, and cast doubt upon God’s faithfulness. And if we do, we will, “see the salvation of the Lord,” which to say, is to see Jesus Christ Himself. And under the power of all of this, “we move forward and walk with God.”

If we examine this, we will see that it is all about trusting the Lord, so that God can work in us and then for us. Israel never had to lift a hand to save themselves from Pharaoh. But once they obeyed God and trusted in Him, the victory was as good as finished. This principle is all through the Bible – it is not a matter of what I do or whether I have strength. It is a matter of having my faith in the One who already has won every victory.

Nov 9

Christ, the Power of God

Christ, the power of God. (1 Cor 1:24)

God does not give us power. He gives us Christ, who IS the power of God – and who dwells in us. Thus, the key to all power is never found in our natural man. In fact, power is only possible in Christ if we are weak in our natural man. Power is not found in what we do, or in what we do not do. You can obey laws, rules, principles, jump through religious hoops, and study the Bible until you are blue in the face, but in the end, there is only one key to power – faith in Christ, who is the power of God.

If you ask the average believer what the solution is to bondage to sin they will tell you, "obedience." They will say that the solution to sin is obedience to God – and they will assure you that God has given you a thing called, "power to obey Him." But wait. The solution to bondage to sin cannot be obedience. Why? Because bondage to sin MEANS that I CANNOT obey God. Sure. Thus, it is folly to say that if I cannot obey God that the solution is that I need to obey God. Indeed, we must be brought to the place where we are absolutely convinced that we cannot obey God. Only once we become weak in ourselves, without confidence in ourselves, will we finally realize that there must be a solution – a power – that is found in One other than ourselves.

That solution is Christ, the power of God, in whose person is His finished work on the Cross, as well as the power of the resurrection. Our faith must be solely in Him, yes, as the basis of relationship with God, but as the source of all we need to obey Him.

Nov 10

Living From Christ

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. (Eph 1:19-20)

We could say that there are two power sources in each believer – our natural man, and Christ. We will live from out of one or the other – by faith we draw upon either for our living. This is why the work of the Cross is necessary – we must be made weak in our natural man so that all of our faith might be in Christ, who is the power of God.

God will create one situation after another in the life of the believer that presses us out of measure – that exposes the lack of life in our natural man. God isn't really MAKING us weak, but showing us that we have always been weak. He is actually showing us the Truth about ourselves. Of one such experience in his life, Paul said, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:" (2 Cor 1:9) There it is. Do we want to be guided into all Truth? Well, this is the Truth – that there is nothing in us by which we can walk with Christ. But in Christ there is all that we need for living.

Nov 11

The Ages to Come

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. (Eph 1:9-10)

This passage is telling us that it is the purpose of God to gather all things in Christ – the meaning of which is to glue them all together by the Person of His Son, in the perfect will of God. Things cannot be gathered or glued within the will of God in any other way. In fact, God will unglue all else.

The Body of Christ is the first fruits of this purpose, now, in this age. God is gathering or forming a body that will hold His fullness: “God has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph 1:22-23) But this is all unto an eternal purpose – for the ages yet to come. It is by Christ through His Body in the ages yet to come that God intends to work out the fullness of His Redemption: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom 8:19)

The Body of Christ that is formed in this age is to be an instrument of God’s greater redemption in the next: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7) The plan of God is rooted here, in this age, but it has a never-ending, and far-reaching impact.

Nov 12

Asking in Prayer

Ask, and it shall be given you. (Mat 7:7)

What does it mean to ASK God? That is really the question about prayer, because we would be dishonest to say that God gives everytime we ask. He doesn’t. There are many times when God is silent even when we think we have a great need.

Of course, we must ask, “according to His will,” (I Jn. 5:14) That better defines the meaning. But it also raises another question: If we are, “to ask according to His will,” then aren’t we asking God to do what He already wants to do? Yes, we are. Then why do we need to ask at all? Why doesn’t God just do His will without us needing to ask?

God does plenty without us needing to specifically ask. But TO ASK – according to God’s will – suggests that I fully WANT the will of God -- and God sees I am ready to receive it. But when am I ready to receive it? When I am abiding in Christ by faith as my source for life. Jesus said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:7) I must ask from OUT OF my relationship with Jesus Christ – and God will provide whatever edifies myself in Him.

Nov 13

In the Name of Jesus

If someone stole your credit card and spend thousands of dollars, “in your name,” would you feel that you were responsible for paying for those items? No. And neither would the law hold you responsible. That is because despite the fact they purchased those items in your name, you never gave them authority to do so. That is the key when it comes to using, “the name of Jesus,” in any prayer or for any purpose: We must have authority to do so from Him. Otherwise, God will not honor what we do.

Simply put, we have the authority to do, “in the name of Jesus ONLY what Jesus would do.” Nothing more. But that is not all. Jesus does not merely hand out such authority to us – because we are a Christian. A believer has the power of Christ only if Christ, the power of God, is living freely in the believer.

Read Acts 19:13-15. Certain Jews tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to cast out evil spirits. It was a disaster. Why? The evil spirits themselves give the answer: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” The principle is this: God can heal directly -- yet more often He uses His power THROUGH His people. But if those people are not abiding in the life of the One in whom there is all power, there will be no power. Why are there few miracles today? Because power has become a THING. We rarely even hear about the reality of, “Christ in us;” or, “Christ, the power of God.”

Nov 14

The Anointing

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

Today many are teaching about, “the anointing.” They claim that this, “anointing,” is TRANSFERABLE. In other words, if you want to be touched by this anointing, you must go to them. They claim that God’s blessings flow down to THEM -- and then to us.

But according to John, the anointing is, “received of HIM.” It is not transferred to you from any person. And this anointing is not, “a power.” It is not a visitation of power that enters a TV studio, or church service – and then does things – only to then leave. You don’t have to hurry up and plug into the anointing of God by calling a ministry or by writing a check – so that you can be blessed before it leaves. No. This is a lie.

God’s only anointing is Christ through the Spirit -- received, not through visitations, nor from another person, but through a permanent habitation. You will note that John says, “the anointing abides IN YOU.” – i.e., “Christ in YOU.” In fact, he says he is writing so that no one can deceive us by claiming otherwise. But his words have been ignored. This is exactly the error that is often taught today on Christian TV.

Nov 15

Spirit and Truth

The hour comes and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)

What did Jesus mean when He said that God must be worshipped, “in Spirit and in Truth?” He was answering a question. The woman at the well had just asked Him which was the right place to worship: Samaria or Jerusalem? (John 4:20) Jesus insisted that the group to which we belong, or the church we attend, or the leader we follow – none of these associations are necessary to worship God. In fact, there are no material methods or mediators necessary to worship Him. We have the freedom to personally and individually worship God directly from the heart, “in Spirit and in Truth.”

Worship that is, “in Spirit and in Truth,” is impossible unless it is solely through Jesus Christ by faith. Christ dwells in us through the Spirit of God and IS the Truth. My relationship to God through Him as my ONLY Mediator is essential. I am free from the need of any other mediators – person or church or religious thing – I need none of these to enhance my access to God. A TRUE worshipper is one who has been MADE TRUE UNTO GOD through a growing knowledge of the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ.

Nov 16

Of God or Man?

This people draws near unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Mat 15:8-9)

I wonder if we realize the seriousness of these words of Jesus. He is contrasting what is OF MAN to what is OF GOD. He is saying that if will teach what is OF MAN as the Truth of God – we do it because our heart that is far from Him

If I present ANYTHING as being from God, but it is really of man, the cause could initially be ignorance. But ultimately, since God is faithful to seek to guide us into Truth, the cause will be a heart that is far from Him. We are either going to allow God to adjust us to Jesus Christ in Truth, or we are going to adjust the Truth to fit ourselves – by substituting for the Truth with what is of man.

When what is of man is presented as being of God, and people embrace it, they are deceived. This can result in false movements, churches, or groups – all the result of a false religious system, based in natural man. The supposed worship that results from the religion of natural man cannot be worship in Spirit and in Truth, for the Spirit of God isn't in it, nor is it the Truth. It will be vain worship – that is – worship that is of no effect in edification in Christ. The only solution is to open up to God the root of the problem – a person is always free to turn his heart back to God for the Truth in Jesus Christ.

Nov 17

Justification by Faith

The apostle Paul goes to great lengths to explain how God is able to justify – declare as righteous – the sinner through Jesus Christ. He discusses the moral and legal issues involved. But all of this teaching is unto this end: Christ is in us, and because He is in us, He IS our life. The saint is a new creature IN Christ Jesus. (II Cor. 5:17) He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17)

Righteousness and life go hand in hand. God does not simply declare my old man in Adam righteous because Jesus died, and leave it there. That would impart no life. Rather, God plants my old man in Adam into the death of Christ. What is raised is a NEW life – a new life that is the result of us being joined to the Lord in His resurrection. I am thus declared righteous – justified – because Christ is my life – and He is the righteousness of God.

The doctrine of justification by faith rightly states that because Christ died for us, that if we put our faith in Him, then not only are all of our sins imputed to Him, but all of His righteousness is imputed to us. This is legally correct. But there is more. If we place our faith in Christ, yes, God legally imputes to us His righteousness. But more than this, God imparts to us Christ Himself. And since Christ is Life Himself, and THE righteousness of God, His presence in us constitutes OUR life, and OUR righteousness.

God never created human beings to have their own righteousness, any more than He created them to have their own life. No. From the start man was to be one with God – living from out of God as his source for all. Jesus Christ in us is the means.

Nov 18

God's Redemptive Desire for All

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (I Tim. 2:5)

The desire of God for all men is salvation – but more. He wants all men, if they will embrace Christ and be saved, to come into the knowledge of the Truth. The knowledge of the Truth is an inward knowing and realization of this same Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the Truth.” (Jn. 14:6)

There are those who would suggest that the knowledge of God can be mustered up out of natural man – that we all have it in us through birth. But nothing could be more contrary to the Truth. Truth is received from above – as is the Life in which the Truth abides. Jesus Christ is both The Life and The Light, and the only way to receive Him is from the outside of dead spiritual selves INTO the same. Then we are made alive because He is THE LIFE. From that point, the Christian life is a forming of Christ within (Gal. 4:19), as God guides us into all of the Truth of Christ. The One whose presence in us constitutes eternal life is the same One we must come to know in Truth.

Nov 19

The Seed of Abraham

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal. 3:16)

Jesus Christ is the, “seed of Abraham,” to which the promises of Abraham pertain – which is the promise of eternal inheritance. Paul emphasizes that there is ONE seed of Abraham. Not two, or many. Jesus is that one seed, and there are no others.

Yet the saints are to be joint-heirs in Christ. Paul explains, “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:26-29) What we see here is that the saints do not increase the ONE seed to MANY. Rather, the saints are all IN the ONE seed of Abraham. All that we can receive is because we are one with Christ – and He has received all of the eternal inheritance.

The plan of God as to inheritance is: The Father, The Son, and all who are IN the Son. Thus, there is ONE seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. But all who are IN Him are one with Him – and thus co-heirs in Christ. So we see that God has wrapped up all that He has for human beings in His Son, and that it is only as we come into the fullness of Christ that eternal inheritance is possible for us.

Nov 20

The Circumcision

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

Paul is bringing out the spiritual Truth that God was illustrating through the OT rite of circumcision. He is saying that NT saints are to be, “the circumcision,” because we have had, “our flesh,” cut off – through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we do not worship God through, or by the means of, the flesh – we do not walk with God on the basis of anything about ourselves, but only through Jesus Christ.

“No confidence in the flesh,” means no FAITH in ourselves, or anything about ourselves. Indeed, the severing of the flesh off that that particular body part illustrated that the Adam race was cut-off. The Adam race could birth nothing of value. Indeed, the Adam race was ended in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. Through Christ there is now a NEW race – the new creature in Christ Jesus.

“The circumcision,” are those who have seen the Truth. They take no confidence in their flesh because they know that there is nothing there in which to put their faith. This results in a rejoicing in Christ because we know we are alive unto God because of Him.

Nov 21

How to Know Jesus Christ

How does one receive revelation from God? Does reading the Bible impart to us revelation from God in a way that will transform us into the image of Christ? Reading the Bible is essential – because it contains all of God’s revelation of Himself to man. But that alone isn’t the way, for some of the biggest heretics read the Bible. It is entirely possible to memorize the Bible and yet have no faith in Christ. How about praying? Also essential. But people in cults pray and remain deceived. How about meditation? Can we sit in a trace, clear our minds, and chant something to God over and over to discover Jesus Christ? Is, “contemplative prayer,” the answer? Nope. Other suggest worship. It has been wrongly stated that it is during a worship service that God shows up and reveals Christ. But some of the biggest error is present today among those who have the biggest worship services.

These are all WAYS people use to try to know Jesus. But Truth cannot be dragged down from heaven through any efforts of men. It cannot be absorbed from the pages of the Bible, nor from another Christian. Neither can we muster up Truth from out of our natural man – there is no Truth in natural man. And it is likewise impossible, even if we know that Christ is in us, and that HE IS the Truth, to develop some method by which we can draw from Him the Truth. So what is the way to know Jesus? There is no WAY – in the sense of a how-to or religious rite -- to know Jesus, because Jesus Christ IS The Way. If you are saved, Christ is already in you – and if Christ is in you, then the embodiment of all Truth is already in you. Now you can begin to know Jesus Christ. But the question remains: How do we grow to know Him? The answer is that we must decrease that He might increase. We must lose our lives in order to find them in Him.

Here is how Paul said he came to KNOW JESUS: “I count all things *but* loss **for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: **That I may know him**, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:8-11) Paul came to know Jesus by renouncing his own life – suffering the loss of himself – and being brought down to nothing. But when this happened to Paul he did not merely grasp true doctrines. More, he was actually SHAPED anew by seeing Christ – that is – he was MADE TRUE UNTO GOD by the Truth.

If we want the Truth, then we have to renounce all of the UNTRUTH that is in us. Chief among the untruth in us is that we belong to ourselves; that there is any righteousness in us. The first thing the light of God is going to do is expose us for who we are, where we are – so that He can deliver us. Scripture states continually that if we want LIGHT we must have HIS LIFE – and in order to have HIS LIFE, we must lose OUR life. This is what it means to pick up our Cross daily and lose our life in order to find His. Prayer and Bible study are not substitutes for faith in Jesus Christ. Indeed, both will absolutely direct us to the Cross as the gateway to life and light in Christ.

Nov 22

Eating and Drinking Without Reverence

For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (I Cor. 11:29-30)

The question here is not whether we are worthy – that would be contrary to everything about the grace of God. Rather, the issue here is whether we ascribe worthiness to Jesus Christ, and what He has done for us, and for the others in the Body.

In the first century, gathering for a meal carried a meaning lost today. Breaking bread together WAS human fellowship to people of that time. Thus, when the early believers gathered, they did include an entire meal as expressive of communion in Christ – but the meal did not create their communion in Christ. Rather, they were celebrating the fact that they were already in communion with Christ based on what He had done for each of them.

In I Corinthians 11, Paul is not talking about a literal meal – although the way they handled the literal meal represented their irreverence for Christ. He is talking about spiritual communion among those in Christ. This communion is among those who, by faith solely in Christ, “eat His flesh,” and, “drink His Blood,” – i.e., have internalized Christ; He is IN THEM. Bring damage or misrepresentation to others regarding HIS LIFE in them -- and you have sinned against Christ. You have tried to enter into spiritual communion with those in Christ -- without reverence for Christ. You have brought into communion with Christ that which is not OF Christ, but of the flesh. No wonder the consequences are so serious.

Nov 23

Judging Ourselves

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (I Cor. 11:31-32)

The meaning of JUDGMENT is found in the root Greek word, which speaks of a discernment, or of a, “finding out.” Judgment is LIGHT – God always tells the Truth about us – so that we may say the same thing about ourselves (confess) and be made true unto Him. He must also tell the Truth about any sin, unbelief, and error – so that, having been judged by the Light, we can renounce these and be set free. Paul is telling us in this passage that if, when God exposes our unbelief, we will agree with Him about it, and give ourselves to Christ, then judgment is already finished on the matter. We will not need further judgment regarding what is already judged. All of this is unto redemption. It is the chastisement of God upon us so that we might walk with Him. Once we see this meaning of judgment, we will see how the saved can remain saved, and yet be judged of God. It is all to expose unbelief that we might be restored.

Nov 24

Judgment vs. Condemnation

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (I Cor. 11:32)

Judgment begins with LIGHT – God exposes all about us and tells the Truth about us. We then confess, or say the same thing in agreement with Him. Jesus Christ IN the saint is THE Light. If Christ dwells in us, then His presence is going to slowly expose everything about us. But this is all so that we might lose ourselves to God and have Christ formed in us. (Gal. 4:19)

When we hear the word, “judgment,” we often confuse it with, “condemnation,” indeed, even the KJV translators sometimes confused the two. But they are not the same. As noted, “judgment,” is a matter of God exposing and calling someone who they are. It is all unto redemption. If the person has their faith in Christ, that would be a good judgment. “Condemnation,” on the other hand, is actually a, “judgment AGAINST.” Condemnation is possible once judgment is refused. It is not unto redemption because it is the result of refusing all that is unto redemption.

God judges us NOW so that we might not be condemned. If we came to Christ for salvation we have been judged in the overall sense. But these two words are also applied in scripture on secondary levels. If Christian people are walking in unbelief, God will judge – expose it as sin so that they might turn. If they refuse to turn, their unbelief is condemned, although they are not eternally condemned – for there is no condemnation for those in Christ. Thank God that He is able to condemn our unbelief and even bring consequences, but as His children, this is all intended for our good.

Nov 25

Judgment vs. Affirmation

For the time *is* come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? (I Pet. 4:17)

Jesus did not come to AFFIRM US. If you listen to many of the popular preachers of today, you would think he did. People have wrongly interpreted the love of God for us as God’s approval of us. No. The fact is, God not only disapproves of all that we are in Adam, but in Christ, the entire Adam race was condemned – and died. Now, if we want to follow Christ, we must see that worked out in us – we must die in Him by picking up our Cross daily and losing our lives. (see Matt. 16:24-25) It is because God loves us that He gave His Son to deliver us from what we are in Adam unto newness of life.

God affirms only His Son. But that is great news for the saint. It means that if we are in Christ then we are in the One whom God unconditionally affirms. This is nothing but another way of stating the Truth of God grace – that God deals with us only on the basis of Jesus Christ.

Nov 26

Under the Mighty Hand of God

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. (I Peter 5:6)

We are never once told in scripture to humble ourselves, submit ourselves, or resign ourselves to anyone or anything but God. In fact, what we do regarding all else is to be governed first by our personal faith in, and submission to, God. Thus, if we are in difficult circumstances, we are not to surrender to them. We are to surrender to God while in them. If we are dealing with a difficult person – even one in authority – we are not to merely submit to them to keep some, “authority principle.” We are to submit to God – and our relationship with God will govern what our relationship with them is to be. In short, we don’t come under, “the mighty hand of God,” by first submitting to circumstances or people. Rather, we first humble ourselves under HIS hand, and if we do, we will eventually know His will in all things.

To, “humble,” yourself under the mighty hand of God is nothing more than abandoning yourself to Him. It is a practical losing of your life for Jesus’ sake. And just as Jesus promised, if we would lose our lives for His sake, we will find life. This is the exaltation Peter is talking about: It is the principle of life from death.

Nov 27

Casting Your Care

Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you. (I Pet. 5:7)

This could easily read, “Throwing the whole of your life with it’s care upon Him.” Jesus told us we must LOSE our lives to Him if we wanted to find true life. (see Matt. 16:24-25) But that is why it is actually quite impossible to cast your fears upon the Lord without casting the whole of your life upon the Lord. Why? Because as long as you hold onto your life you will fear losing it; you will seek to protect it. It would be silly to think that God will magically remove the fear of losing your life, when in fact, He tells you that He wants you to lose it. Thus, the solution to fear is to lose yourself to Christ – abandon your life to Him in faith. It is amazing how quickly fear dissipates when we lose ourselves to God.

We usually think that the reason for anxiety is that we are losing our lives. No. Fear is the result of trying to save and protect them. Abandon your entire self to the Lord in an unconditional renunciation and the fear that arises from trying to save your life will have no basis. The old natural life IS the ground of Satan and it is upon that ground in us that he has access. Lose it by faith to Christ and His victory will be yours.

God will not leave it to us to sort all of this out. He will show us how to do this and what it means. This is part of Jesus’ promise that the Spirit of God would guide us into all the Truth.

Nov 28

Resisting the Devil

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith. knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*. To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (I Peter 5:8-10)

This passage from I Peter makes it perfectly clear that while we are in a trial of faith, God is fully in charge. God has us IN the trial, and He will know when our suffering has done it's work. That is why we are told to, "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God." His hand is there -- under which we might humble ourselves. We are told God is present with us so that we can, "cast the whole of our life and care upon Him." Likewise, we are told that, "the same afflictions," are doing a work in other brethren. And finally, we have words like, "in due time," and, "when you have suffered for awhile." All of this points to the fact that we are in this by God's hand, or His purposes, and not because God has forsaken us.

Note the command, "Resist the Devil steadfast in the faith." As was the case with Job in the OT, God will give the devil access to us for the very purpose that we might resist Him. Why? So that we might be built in faith – so that we might be matured, established, strengthened, and settled in Christ. Only a trial of faith can prove faith.

How do we, "resist the devil steadfast in the faith?" By, "humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God," by faith – and refusing to move. All of this is unto the purpose of, "the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

Nov 29

To Christ Be Dominion

To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (I Pet. 5:11)

Jesus Christ, through His Redemption, has won every victory that there is to win, including victory over the ultimate enemy, death. Thus, Jesus Christ has been given all dominion – over all things. This reveals to us the Truth about any possible victory that we could experience in the Christian life: In order to OVERCOME the enemy, we must COME UNDER Jesus Christ as Lord. In short, we have to surrender to the winning side.

When we, "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God," we are coming under the hand of eternal victory. Thus, rather than win His victory all over again, we live from out of His victory – standing by faith. This is why Peter is able to say, "Resist the devil in the faith," rather than say, "Defeat the devil." No. We are in the victory of Christ by faith and need only resist the Devil by standing by faith in that victory.

Nov 30

The Power of Deception

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

When we are joined to the Lord in spirit, that union IS the new creature in Christ. But everything outside of that union remains of the old natural man. You will note that Jesus did not obliterate the works of Satan from the old. No. He made a new – in Himself. For the new creation in Christ, the works of the Devil are destroyed. But there remains a possibility that Satan could try to get to us through our natural man.

The only power that Satan has today in the life of the saint is that of deception. Satan will blind us to, or lie to us about, the fact that we have victory in Christ. But his lies are not merely doctrinal lies. He can still gain access to us through our natural man – our feelings, emotions, and other dimensions of the soul realm. He can use these to as vehicles to blind us.

The solution is to know Jesus Christ. We cannot discern the lies of Satan until we can discern Jesus Christ. Note John's words: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Once Christ is manifested to us, no deception can blind us."

Dec 1

Purpose of the Sacrifices

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then they would have ceased to be offered because the worshippers once purged would have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. (Heb. 10:1-3)

What was the purpose of the OT animal sacrifices? Was it to temporarily appease God with the blood of bulls and goats until Jesus Christ could come and shed His own Blood? No. In fact, if you read this passage, you will see that the sacrifices of the OT did absolutely NOTHING to contribute to real redemption. In fact, we are told outright what was the purpose of those sacrifices: They were a reminder of sin. But WHO needs to be reminded of sin? God? No. We do. Thus, if I brought a sacrifice I was, by my actions, confessing that I was dead in sin and that I couldn't be saved except through the death of a substitute. Thus, I was putting my faith, by anticipation, in the One who was yet to come. In addition, by my continual sacrificing I was also confessing that animal blood could not set me free from my sin. That same substitute had to once and for all and forever die for me so that I could be saved. Thus, the OT sacrifices, while they glorified God in Jesus Christ, were not to appease God, but to remind man of his sin and need for a Savior.

Old vs. New Covenant

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: **Not according** to the covenant that I made with their fathers...for this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws **into** their mind, and write them **in** their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for **all** shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Heb. 8:8-12)

There are a number of ways to describe the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Some people would say that the Old Covenant is one of law, while the New Covenant is one of grace. There is some Truth to this. But if you gather up all of God's Words on this matter, perhaps the best way to say it is this: The Old Covenant was a shadow of Christ. The New Covenant is Christ Himself – IN US.

All through the OT we see Christ in type and shadow. Circumcision pictures Christ crucified. The Passover Lamb is a type of Christ. All of the offerings and sacrifices show Christ, in one dimension or another, in His Redemptive work. The High Priest is a type of Christ, as are the Levites. The Tabernacle is Christ. The Holy of Holies is Christ. The moral law itself was a written expression of the righteousness of God through Christ. Indeed, Hebrews says, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things...", (Heb. 10:1). and Paul affirms, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the substance *is* of Christ." (Col. 2:17) All of these types and shadows, were gathered up into John the baptist, and were collectively only, "a voice crying in the wilderness," preparing the way of the Lord. (Is. 40:3) The law, "was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:24-25) The shadow of Christ has now given way to Christ Himself. We are no longer UNDER the OT. Rather, Christ is IN US.

If you read the above passage from Hebrews you will note that the distinction that is given between the Old and New Covenants is that of the OUTWARD under the Old vs. the INWARD under the new. This agrees with Jesus' words to His disciples before His ascension. He said, "The Holy Spirit has been WITH you, but shall be IN you." (John 14:17) Under the Old Covenant the Spirit of God made many visitations. God was WITH people by His Spirit. But under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of God dwells IN US.

This New Covenant is that of Christ in us – (Col. 1:27) -- birthing a new creature in Jesus Christ. It is the Covenant of full Redemption for those who will embrace Christ, and of the full restoration of all creation under God. Christ will be all in all.

Christ in us had never been before Acts 2. As noted, Jesus said so. But Paul also says, "Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Dec 3

The Times of Ignorance

And the times of this ignorance God winked at (Gk: overlooked), but now commands all men every where to repent: Because he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

According to Paul, “the times of ignorance,” were those centuries wherein God overlooked unbelief because they had not been given the Truth. This is clear because he then states that this has changed: BUT NOW God commands men everywhere to repent – the Truth of Jesus Christ is now preached.

Now note: The people who lived during, “the times of ignorance,” obviously were never saved. Had they been saved, then God would have nothing to overlook -- the fact that He does overlook their ignorance, proves they were not saved. But it also proves that neither had they rejected Christ – they were ignorant, not rebellious – and again, God has overlooked their unbelief. This raises a question: What becomes of someone who lived during, “the times of ignorance that God overlooked?” They never heard the Truth. They were never saved. But they never rejected Christ.

The answer is found in the final verse: God will judge all by Jesus Christ. In other words, God will ask, “What have you done with Jesus Christ?” The answer for those people is, “Nothing, because we have never heard of Him.” That is the Truth. It is why God has overlooked the times of ignorance.

Here we see a strong indication that God has not yet judged untold millions who lived and died – they had no light. Light is the basis for judgment – for the Bible says, “This is condemnation – light has come...” (see John 3:19) I’m not talking about second chances, but the one and only chance that God Himself is saying they never had – which is why He is overlooking their ignorance. God desires for all to be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4) I would submit that means He will see to it that all have light – whether in this life or the next. That may disturb some folks, but in fact, it ought to make us rejoice.

Dec 4

Death and Judgment

As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. (Heb 9:27)

What is judgment? Judgment is God telling the Truth about us and then passing sentence. What is the judgment of God going to be upon those who have never heard? Simply the Truth – they never heard. Thus, they are not saved OR condemned. You will also note that there could be an indeterminable time between death and judgment. There is nothing in this verse that says otherwise. Add to that the fact that we are talking about something that happens OUTSIDE of time, and it would seem that before we condemn millions to hell who never heard, we might want to rethink our theology.

Dec 5

Hold Fast

Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end....for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. (Heb. 3:6,14)

The context of Hebrews 3 is not salvation – but of the taking possession of our inheritance in Christ. Hebrews 3 is actually God’s own commentary on the events of Numbers 13 and 14, when Israel would not enter and take possession of the land. You will note the words, “hold fast.” Those words only make sense if we realize that our inheritance is already given to us in Christ. Just as God said to Israel, “This is the land that I HAVE given you,” so it is if we are in Christ -- our inheritance is already freely given in Him. “Hold fast,” suggests we already possess and must not let go.

Notice that we are to, “hold fast by faith UNTO THE END.” The end of what? Some folks might think that we are to decide what God ought to do in our lives, and then hunker down and hold fast until He does it. Like we need to wrestle stuff out of God. No. The word behind, “end,” could be rendered, “completion.” We are to HOLD FAST by faith unto the completion of God’s purpose in us -- GOD’S purpose, not ours.

Israel was told the lands was theirs, and then, by faith, enter in and take possession. Jericho was the blueprint – they took possession of it without a shot being fired. So it is with us. By faith we are to ask God to do, “whatever it takes,” to complete His work in us. This doesn’t mean we will be passive. But as we respond to what God does do, we will be living FROM a finished victory – rather than trying to win it. In short, we are to walk with Christ HOLDING FAST to Him, rather than trying to GRAB onto Him.

Dec 6

The Unseen Life

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8)

The conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus is one with a man who had no frame of reference for the spiritual realm. Jesus tried to tell him, “Unless you are born from above you cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) But he even interpreted this on a natural level. Finally, Jesus gives the above description to him of the nature of the new birth: It is a life you cannot see with the natural eye.

The new birth from above is the result of Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of God, joining us to Himself – His Spirit to our human spirit. This is the new creature in Christ Jesus. But the natural man cannot see the new creature in Christ – although the effects can be seen. The only way to see the new creation is to become one. This is why it is impossible to make people understand what it means to have an inward revelation of Jesus Christ. But once they begin to see Him, they will know exactly what you mean.

Dec 7

Born of Water and of Spirit

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Physical baptism saves no one. It is merely a picture – of death. Indeed, death cannot save anyone because it is DEATH. Only resurrection can save people from OUT of death. When Jesus said we must, “be born of water and of the Spirit,” He was telling us that we must die and be raised if we want to be born from above.

But in what sense? Paul says that we were baptised into the death of CHRIST – he says that this means we were planted into the likeness of His death. He then says that we were raised IN Christ, i.e., planted into the likeness of His resurrection. Note the ONENESS with Christ. Being baptised or planted INTO Christ is different than simply being baptised BECAUSE of Christ. Sure. We are actually, “joined to the Lord,” and now, “one spirit with Him.” (I Cor. 6:17)

This is the new birth from above – we have been birthed OUT of the Adam race through baptism into the death of Christ. And we have been birthed INTO the new race by being raised in Christ. We are born again from above as a new creature in Christ Jesus. This results in, “Christ in you,” which is the core definition of Christianity.

If we had no other teaching at all on this matter, it would certainly show that salvation is not a new religion, or merely new conduct, or a restoration of the old life. No. Salvation is a renunciation of the old life through the Cross – baptism into the death of Christ – and a birth from above unto new life through resurrection in Christ. We are not merely given a new life – Christ IS our life and our salvation because we are forever joined to Him.

Dec 8

Wheat or Tares

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

Jesus might just as well have said, “That which is born of the flesh cannot birth that which is born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit will never birth that which is of the flesh.” He is giving a distinction here that is as certain and as utter as that between the old and new creations.

Only God can birth that which is of the Spirit. Obviously, this primarily pertains to people. But it also pertains to churches, ministries, and movements. That which is of God is birthed of God. That which is of man is birthed of man. And in the end, things always grow up to BE what they already are – through birth – and will show evidence of the source of life. This is the parable of the wheat and tares -- wheat and tares look the same before they mature -- but when they do, the difference between them is evident.

Dec 9

Faith and Truth

If we are to believe God, there must be a revelation of God. If we are to believe and know the Truth, there must be a revelation of the Truth. Thus, rather than ask God for faith. We ought to ask Him for revelation of the Truth. Then we will have something TO believe. Paul writes, "Faith comes (to be) by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17) He is not saying that God acts upon us and causes us to hear. Rather, He is saying that that unless God speaks a Word – or gives a revelation – there is nothing TO hear. But once God does speak, and we do hear – the meaning of which is to embrace – then faith comes to be in us.

God does not expect us to muster up faith from out of ourselves. No. He expects us to hear the Truth He reveals. And once faith comes to be in me through my hearing of the Truth, then my faith IS the evidence and substance IN ME of the very Truth I have heard. (see Heb. 11:1) Faith is not emotional – we cannot believe with our emotions. Neither is faith intellectual – we cannot believe merely with our brains. Faith is a relationship – it is a trust and reliance upon God, based on the revelation of Himself to me.

Dec 10

Contributing Life to His Body

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)

There can be suffering in the life of the saint that is not for that saint alone. To the extent that we are allowing God to use our sufferings to form Christ in us, we are benefiting the entire Body of Christ. How? Paul said in II Cor. 4: "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:11-12) If I carry my personal Cross it will result in LIFE – His life being released, not only in me, but in His Body as a whole – for we are all one IN CHRIST.

The members of the Body of Christ are, "connected spiritually," with each other ONLY through the Vine. Thus, if Christ is revealed in me, there is an impact upon all others who are abiding in Him. The members cannot edify each other by merely abiding in each other. No. Only if I abide in Christ as my personal Vine, and you abide in Christ as your personal Vine, do we have, "communion," IN CHRIST – and the life that He makes manifest in me can then impact you, and visa versa.

Sufferings for Christ's sake NOW do contribute to the life of the Body NOW. But there is more to His Body than only the saints who are alive NOW. All who have been in Christ down through the ages constitute the Body of Christ. Thus, all the sufferings in them that produced the life of Christ contribute to ALL who are in the Body of Christ – the Body that God has been building for the eternal ages.

Dec 11

A Weight of Glory

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory. (II Cor. 4:17)

There is a big difference between suffering for Jesus' sake and suffering for other reasons – such as a wrong doing or as one who has rejected Christ. God can use even those sufferings to turn us to Christ. But the suffering that is for Jesus' sake is that which produces His life in us – ministering life to others – all unto God's glory for the eternal ages.

The phrase itself, “for Jesus' sake” (II Cor. 4:5-11, John 12:9), ought to tell us that it is possible to suffering WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD and yet not seem to benefit from it very much personally. Actually, if the life of Christ is being manifest in us we are benefiting eternally -- but to our flesh, and to our natural life, it often may not seem like it. Clearly, to LOSE our lives for Jesus' sake (Matt. 16:24-25) is a LOSS to our SELF. It is a death. But what we FIND is of infinitely greater value – Christ as our life.

If you examine God's Word on this matter, you will see that despite all of the wonderful freedom of knowing Christ NOW, that the real fruit will not be fully experienced NOW. Rather, it is all for THEN. NOW is the age wherein Christ is being formed in His people through, “light affliction” – through a temporal weight of affliction. But THEN is the point at which all that has been formed in us comes into full release – an eternal weight of glory.

Dec 12

The Unseen Eternal

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. (II Cor. 4:16-18)

Life in Christ is received from above through the Holy Spirit. His life is not life that is of this world. But we do receive Him IN an earthen vessel. And despite the fact that our life is not OF this world, we do live in this world. We have to deal with our environment.

Once we receive Jesus Christ within, there is automatically created a conflict. All that He is stands contrary to all that we are in Adam. All that He is in us stands contrary to all that is around us in this world. This conflict will make our lives a battlefield. To the extent that we stand by faith in Christ we will suffer for His sake. If will, “bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” then, “the life of the Lord Jesus will be made manifest in us.” (see II Cor. 4:10) What Paul is telling us is this: All of our suffering will pass into history – and all of the circumstances over which we suffered will pass into history. But what will remain is what has been formed in us of Christ. It is for this purpose that God deals with us as He does: The eternal things not yet seen.

Dec 13

The Work that Abides

But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For no other foundation can a man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (I Cor. 3:10-15)

By the time God is done with us, all that is going to remain is that which is OF CHRIST. You will note that the works done TO build do not pass through the fire. No. Works done ARE in the past. What passes through the fire is the temple that is built by those historical works. Only that which is built of eternal materials – gold, silver, etc. – abide – only what is OF CHRIST abides. All that is not of Christ, but of man, are obliterated.

Now ask: How do I build that which is of Christ? -- in myself, let alone do it in others? Paul said, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:10-12) This is how: That which is OF CHRIST cannot be built out of the materials found in man. Instead, that which is OF CHRIST is built through the dying of what is of man, that His life might be released in ourselves and others.

The life of Christ that is formed in us is the basis for all ministry – it is His life through which we edify, or build up, others in Christ. All else will be, "burned up." Thus, the starting point is the personal Cross: "Death in us, and life in you." This is how ministry builds the temple of God, which is ourselves personally, and His Body as a whole.

Dec 14

The God of all Grace

For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

God doesn't simply give grace as a THING, nor is grace merely descriptive of how He works. Rather, God gives us Himself. God IS, "the God of all grace," i.e., the God whose nature is that of all grace. (I Peter 5:10) When God gave us Jesus Christ, He gave us the One who is the sum of all of that He is – the sum of all grace and Truth. In Christ dwelt the fullness of God. (Col. 1:19) How God works in Christ is therefore going to contain grace and Truth. All that God reveals is going to show that He is the God of all grace. All that the Holy Spirit manifests is going to reflect both the grace and Truth of the One the Holy Spirit always manifests: Jesus Christ. These are absolutes, for God cannot deny Himself. God is telling the Truth about Himself to us through His Son.

Dec 15

The Crossroads

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son – so that we might live and not perish. (see John 3:16) Everything that God does is motivated by love – unto His eternal purposes in Christ. Indeed, Paul said, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31) There is nothing negative about God. He desires that all men be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. (I Tim. 2:4) In short, God is a redemptive God. That is His nature. He is the God of ALL GRACE.

This is the GOOD NEWS. This is the Truth. So why would anyone reject it? Paul told the Galatians the Truth about their false gospel of legalism. He was trying to deliver them from a terrible path they had chosen of legalism, and yet he wondered if they had become his enemy because he told them the Truth. What is the core issue here?

John the apostle told us why people will not accept the good news. He wrote, “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, **because their deeds were evil**. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, **lest his deeds should be reproved**.” (John 3:19-20) The reason why people will not accept the Truth is because refuse to accept what the Truth reveals about themselves. When God brings a person light – even if it is the elementary light of the good news – He must tell the Truth about us. Jesus Christ IS the Light, and there is simply no other way to come to Him for salvation, or for freedom from error, unless I embrace what His light exposes. And for man in Adam, the Truth about us is that we are all dead sinners. For the Galatians, the Truth was that they had embraced another gospel – under which Christ was of no effect for them. We have to agree with God about ourselves if we are to enter into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship....” (I Jn. 1:7)

Is that a bad thing? No. It is redemption. It is freedom. But, as John says, if I will not allow my sin to be exposed AS sin, then I am choosing darkness. I am choosing to continue with my façade – only now no longer in ignorance -- and some of the greatest facades are religious facades. We therefore see in this passage that when God brings light, we have reached a crossroads. We cannot go back. This is of GOD. And it is the pivot point that will determine which direction our lives will take. I must either love the light of Jesus Christ and all that He exposes, or I will choose to love the darkness that will keep me living in the delusion of my own righteousness. God wants only freedom for us, but at some point, we must confess our bondage in order to be free.

Do we want the Truth? We cannot want it more than God wants it for us. But the Truth – which is found only in Jesus – will expose all UNTRUTH. But not only the untruth that we believe – it will expose all of the untruth that is in our hearts. Loving the light will make us true to God. Loving darkness will simply make us all the more untrue to God. Thankfully, God is a redemptive God. What that means is that if we have loved darkness rather than light, we can still turn back and choose light rather than darkness. It is never too late to come into the light and confess the Truth to God. He is evermore open to us. The sin is when we will not do so and choose to remain hidden from Him.

Dec 16

The Day Abraham Died

“For now I know that you fear God, seeing thou have not withheld your son, your only son from Me. (Gen. 22:12)

God had promised Abraham a son – one who would not only be his heir, but one through whom, “shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18) Isaac would be that son, but wrapped up in Isaac was the promise of a Messiah. Abraham had to wait 26 years for the fulfillment of this promise. He made many mistakes along the way. But Isaac was born to him – long after it was possible for Abraham or Sara to have a child. He was a miracle of God given to Abraham to be his heir, and began a decendancy that would lead to the Christ.

Abraham had received the fulfillment of the promise. But in Genesis 22, God says to Abraham, “Take your only son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering.” (see Gen. 22:2) And Abraham obeyed God. Notice: Abraham was not, at this point, believing God for a promise yet to be fulfilled – he was believing God for a promise already fulfilled.

God is illustrating the principle that His promises are not only to be fulfilled for us, but we must be made fit for that fulfillment – but being rightly related to God. Isaac did not die that day as a sacrifice. No. But Abraham did die – he relinquished all self-interest and ownership over even that which God had given him. Then there could be a full release of God’s fulfillment. God will keep His promises. But in the meantime, He wants us to lose the promise into His hands so that we might find them in Jesus Christ.

Dec 17

Walking in Circles

See, I have given into your hand Jericho....and you shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times. (Josh. 6:2-4)

Jericho was the FIRST city taken by Israel upon entering the promised land by faith. As the FIRST – it stands as God’s temple. Israel took this city without a shot being fired. It was all God. They were simply along for the ride – in faith and obedience.

Jericho was a defeated city because God had given the city to Israel. It did not become more defeated because Israel circled it 13 times. No. That did nothing to win this victory. But it was a WALK in faith that proclaimed that victory. Have you ever felt as if you were walking in circles in your Christian life? With no results? If you are living by faith from out of Christ, you are proclaiming His victory. Strongholds will fall, not because you have wrestled to win victory, but because you have wrestled to hold the victory already given to you. Sometimes that wrestling seems like walking in circles. But it is not. It is a wrestling that will eventually prove that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Dec 18

The Only Solution for Sin

The solution for sin is not to start obeying. You cannot start obeying. Rather, the solution for sin is to start believing – to begin putting our reliance upon the One in whom is the power of the resurrection. Then, you may start obeying by faith.

There is this idea among Christians that God will somehow give us a stronger will. No. We need a stronger faith. If we want to know how to exercise our power of free choice it is this: To put our faith in the One who dwells in us.

Dec 19

A New Generation

Over the last few years, there has been offered yet another cause for what ails Christian people: “Generational curses.” It is taught that somewhere in the past, if one of our ancestors dabbled in the occult, or sinned in some terrible way, that they came under a curse that we have inherited from them. This curse is imbedded in our family – almost like it is part of our, “spiritual gene pool.” We are told that this could account for any present sickness, financial failures, emotional damage, inability to obey God, temperament problems, etc. Just about anything is blamed upon these curses. But it is questionable as to whether generational curses exist even for unbelievers. How far do you want to go back? Is any family free from sin? But regardless, they are never once given in scripture as the reason why the redeemed fail to live in the victory of Christ.

The solution here is the Truth of the finished work of Christ. We are all born in Adam. That alone puts us all under the curse of death. But Christian people are no longer in Adam. We are in Christ. “If any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17) So even if you want to believe there is such a thing as generational curses, those curses would be limited to the Adam race. They could not be upon the NEW race or creature in Christ.

This Truth is the basis of Christianity itself. Christ is in us – and we are now of HIS GENERATION. What this means is that the entire Adam race upon which any curse could be put was ended in Christ. Jesus Christ bore all sin and became a curse for us. It is finished. The ground of Satan is removed. It is solely through faith in Christ that we gain freedom from sin and all else that ails us.

So rather than have someone pray that we would be free of some generational curse, we need to get free from unbelief – the unbelief that blinds us to the Truth of the finished work of Christ. We need God to show us the Truth that we might BELIEVE – that we might put our faith solely in Christ. Thus, once again we see the necessity of coming back to the foundation of the finished work of Christ. The Adam race contained all sin, and in Christ, all sin is taken away. We are raised new creatures. This Truth reveals the solution for all sin and for anything else, real or fabricated, that we might think is our problem. Faith in Christ is our victory.

Dec 20

Apprehended by God

I follow after that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12)

Most believers spend an enormous amount of time and energy trying to apprehend God. We encounter problems and experience great need, and we understandably seek to bring God into the situation. It may have never occurred to us that God wants to apprehend US – or that the problem at hand is, in fact, because He is apprehending us.

Note the words: “I am apprehended of Christ.” That tells us that God is not sitting in heaven waiting for us to decide what the purpose of our lives ought to be – and only then if we apprehend Him for that purpose will He move. No. God already has a purpose in Christ for each believer. If we are saved, we are already being apprehended for that purpose. In short, we must apprehend -- not God for our purpose -- but we must apprehend His purpose for us.

What is that purpose? “To be conformed to the image of his Son” – which in NT Greek read, “to be formed together in the image of His Son.” God wants to form Christ in us, so that through the revelation of Him, we might be formed together with Him, and become living witnesses to God.

Dec 21

Captain of the Host of the Lord

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. (Josh. 5:13-14)

Joshua wanted to know the whose side this angel would fight for. He said, “Neither side. I’m here to fight for the Lord’s interests.” This is true in any case we might consider. God is not on our side. He is not on anyone’s side. The question is whether we are on His side, with His purpose in mind. When Paul says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31), he is talking from the perspective of God doing what is best for us -- God is for us in that He will be faithful to accomplish His purpose in us.

Many of God’s people talk, live, and even pray, as if God is on their side – as if God’s purpose is to bless anything their hand touches. No. God only blesses what His hand touches. Again, the question is whether we will come under His hand.

God tells us to lose our lives. Will He bless the life he tells us to lose, making it all the more difficult to lose it? Nope. Again – God only blesses His purpose in Christ. We need to lose ourselves to Him and ask Him to do whatever it takes to complete that purpose for Himself in us. We need to be on God’s side – it is the only winning side.

Dec 22

The Hope of Glory

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:17-18)

There are a number of expressions in the Bible that seem a little odd to our way of speaking. For example, Paul says we are, "in Christ." He says there is life, "in Christ Jesus." (John 1:4) These seem odd to us because we tend to think of things in physical terms. Paul is speaking spiritually – when he says we are, "in Christ," he is referring to our spiritual oneness with Him. And when he says that life is, "in Christ Jesus," he is talking about Christ being the living source of all life.

In the above passage is another one of those expressions. Paul speaks of glory that will be revealed IN US. What does that mean? Well, it goes back to the fact that the core of Christianity is, "Christ in us, the HOPE of glory." (Col. 1:27) In other words, Christ already dwells in us – and HE is the hope of the glory spoken of by Paul in Romans 8. How so? If Christ is being FORMED in us (Gal. 4:19), and we are being formed together with Him (Rom. 8:29), then this is setting the stage for the time when, "we may be glorified together," with Him. In other words, He is creating IN US a spiritual union with Himself – much of it through suffering -- that is wonderful now, although it will be released only to fullness in the eternal ages.

Note that it is not we who are glorified, but we are glorified together with Christ – it is HIS glory revealed in us. In short, God is now forming Christ in us – but when we are changed at the resurrection, we will be loosed from this natural body and be able to realize the fullness of His life IN US – and we will manifest His glory through us. This is the great purpose of God in Christ unto the ages yet to come.

Dec 23

The Realization of His Glory

For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (Phil 3:20-21)

According to Greek scholar M. R. Vincent, this passage is not translated well. It could read, "Who shall fashion our present limited bodies to conform to the body of His glory." The last part of the passage suggests that this fashioning has begun NOW – but that it is all unto the point where, at the resurrection, we will be clothed upon with a body that is able to contain and manifest HIS GLORY. In short, Christianity in this age is, "Christ in you, the HOPE of glory, but then, at the resurrection, there is no more need for hope, so it will be, "Christ in us, the REALIZATION OF HIS GLORY."

Dec 24

The Resurrected Soma

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:42-44)

There seems to be a common misconception that at the resurrection we are going to have our natural bodies REPLACED with a spiritual body. But the Bible indicates that rather than replace our natural with the spiritual, the natural will be CHANGED to a spiritual body. In other words, there is a one-on-one correspondence between the natural body and the resurrected body. It is the SAME body.

But we must understand the meaning of BODY. The word for, “body, “ in the Greek NT is SOMA. It can mean the physical body, but often is used to denote some of the immaterial dimensions of man’s makeup. For example Paul write, “ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life...(Rom. 8:10) Your physical body isn’t dead if Christ is in you. Paul also talks of, “the body (SOMA) of sin.” (Rom. 6:6) These and other usages suggest that the more complete definition of SOMA, as used in the NT, would be, “the sum of man’s earthly nature.”

This opens up passages like the one above. It tells us that our entire earthly nature – physical body included – is going to be changed to that which is spiritual. Indeed, we are told elsewhere, that it is going to be changed so that it can both contain and manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ.

Dec 25

Emmanuel

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt. 1:23)

At the very birth of Jesus, the angels announced what had already been prophesied for centuries: The One that was born was GOD INCARNATE. He is called, “Emmanuel,” which means, “God with us.” For the NT saint, this means more than just the fact Jesus was born 2000 years ago. It speaks of the present reality of, “Christ in us.”

John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1, 14) But again, the Word was made flesh – He was made a man -- so that after He finished His redemptive work and ascended, He could come back down through the Spirit and make man one with Himself. God is truly with us in Christ, and it is all unto the fact that we will be living in Christ forever throughout the eternal ages.

Dec 26

For God So Loved

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
(John 3:16-17)

The most often quoted verse in the Bible contains the whole of the gospel, and in it, is revealed the heart of God. The motive of God in giving us Christ was love. Jesus Christ came to SAVE us from our sins – not condemn us for our sins. But you will note that this Truth of the gospel will be nonsense to me if I don't believe that I need to be saved from my sins – or if I think I can do something to save myself. This is why the good news of Jesus Christ must always contain the bad news about our condition before God. The sinner must see his need or else the gospel will be to him nothing more than a religion.

So often, the gospel is presented as, “a threat of punishment.” The mantra is often, “believe in Jesus or be sent to hell!” But this is silly because we are already dead spiritually – we might even say that we are already in a hell of sorts, because in Adam we are separated from God. So it is not so much a matter of God punishing us if we don't believe. It is a matter of us refusing life and sealing our death: “He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18) If we won't believe, God will simply judge us to be worthy of our choice.

God is not the author of death. Jesus Christ is the life, and the refusal of him is death. But none of that is necessary. Jesus Christ has already finished everything necessary for each of us to be saved. He died for all – not just an elect few. Why? Because God so LOVED the world – this is why He gave His only begotten Son.

Dec 27

The Necessity for a Savior

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Rom. 5:19)

The necessity for a Savior is predicated upon the fact that man, as a race, is spiritually dead – and that there is nothing he can do to save himself. This is why where the sin nature of man is denied, the Truth of the Savior and His Redemption is always distorted. Such error is even possible among those who profess Christ. Paul wrote: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Gal. 2:21) If the basis of my relationship with God is anything about myself, I am suggesting that Christ did not really need to die for me, because I always had the solution in myself. No. We must be saved by One other than ourselves. God has saved us by grace because that is the only way in which He could save us.

Dec 28

The Purpose of God in Christ

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

That, “Christ be formed” in believers was Paul heart travail. It was His solution to self-righteousness through works – the Truth that answers all error. It is, in fact, the purpose of God in His people for this age. But if this was Paul’s travail, written as part of God’s inspired Word, why is it not OUR travail? Rather, most of God’s people are blinded to the reality of Christ in us. He has been replaced with all manner of religion.

The word, “formed,” in the NT Greek, means, “to be inwardly realized or expressed.” This is really what it means to KNOW Jesus Christ; to come into the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. It is really what it means to, “know the Truth.” Note that this is NOT a matter of mustering up knowledge from out of ourselves. No. It is a matter of receiving Him from above and having Him revealed in us. And as Christ is formed in us, we will, “be formed together with Him” – which is the meaning of Romans 8:29, where Paul says we are to be, “conformed,” to His image. This is the purpose of God in His people for this age.

Christianity is, “Christ in us, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) The impact of Christ in us, if we are walking in God’s will, is that Christ would be formed in us, and then, we together with Him. But this is all unto God’s desire that we become His witnesses – living evidence of Christ through the manifestation of Christ in and through us. All of this purpose of God is unto the end that we might be released into the fullness of Christ for the eternal ages, and reign and rule in fellowship under Him as joint heirs.

Dec 29

God Himself Shall be With Them

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)

Jesus Christ is the tabernacle of God. He is the means – Christ in us – by which God dwells with us. He is the means by which we become His people, and He becomes our God.

The Body of Christ is also called, “the temple of God” – and the individual believer is likewise, “the temple of God.” (I Cor. 3:16) Jesus Himself is the primary temple of God – “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” (Col. 1:19) But the church is His Body in which He collectively dwells, and He dwells in the individual saint. So we have God in Christ and Christ in us – Christ, the true temple of God has come and made His dwelling place in us. Revelation provides a spiritual picture of this as it is NOW, and shows it to be the purpose towards which God is working.

Dec 30

A Better Country

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city. (Heb. 11:16)

Jesus said, "You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world." (John 8:23) But when Christ comes to dwell in us, we are joined to Him in the Spirit. Thus, The presence of Jesus Christ in us – through the Spirit – makes us citizens, no longer of this earthly realm, but of the heavenlies: Just as He is of the heavenlies, so are we of the heavenlies, because of His presence in us.

If you are born from above, you are a new creature in Christ. (II Cor. 5:17) Thus, your new citizenship isn't simply a matter of a new label. It is a matter of the life that is in you – you are a NEW creature whose very constitution is that of the heavenlies. You haven't merely been given a new citizenship – you ARE a citizen of the heavenlies because you are joined to Christ, and thus, you have been raised up and seated in spiritual places in Christ. (Eph. 2:6)

If this is the TRUTH, then obviously God is going to be working along that line with His people. It is why the flesh is contrary to the Spirit. It is why we must not live according to this world. It is why God tells us we must lose our lives in order to find life. It is why God is not going to continue to affirm the goals of our natural life. We have a new citizenship – which carries all of the blessings of God in Christ Jesus. This is the better country. The city of God is entered through The Door and The Way, Jesus Christ.

Dec 31

New Beginnings

There was a man who had fought in WWII and had, by his own admission, committed a number of terrible atrocities. He had killed women and children, etc. He was haunted by what he had done. But at a Bible study, when the subject of salvation came up, he said, "I could never be saved. My sins are too great." There was a mixed reaction from the people who were there. Some told him that his sins were not as great as he thought. Others rightly told him that it didn't matter how great his sins were, that Jesus Christ died for Him.

It would be easy to sympathize with this guy because he is weighed down with his sin. But I would submit that he is living in unbelief. He has never seen how bad his sin really is. This is always the reason why people do not come to Christ. If they saw their true condition before God, they would realize that there is no hope for them except by His grace, and that would expose all excuses for coming to Christ by grace. The fact is, Jesus Christ has taken away every sin committed by each of us. Thus, no matter what sin I have been guilty of, and no matter how long I have lived in it, the day of my salvation is always TODAY. There are always new beginnings in Jesus Christ.

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John 1:1	<u>Dec25</u>
John 1:4	<u>Jan02</u>
	<u>Sep08</u>
	<u>Sep09</u>
	<u>Dec22</u>
John 1:7	<u>Jun01</u>
John 1:14	<u>Dec25</u>
John 1:17	<u>Dec14</u>
John 1:29	<u>Mar11</u>
John 3:3	<u>Jun24</u>
	<u>Jun25</u>
	<u>Oct07</u>
	<u>Dec06</u>
John 3:5	<u>Dec07</u>
John 3:6	<u>Feb01</u>
	<u>Apr23</u>
	<u>May05</u>
	<u>Jun09</u>

	Aug09
	Sep13
	Oct06
	Dec08
John 3:8	Dec06
John 3:16	Dec15
John 3:16-17	Dec26
John 3:18	Dec26
John 3:19	Dec03
John 3:19-20	Jan07
	Dec15
John 3:27	Feb03
	Apr06
John 4:20	Nov15
John 4:23-24	Nov15
John 6:28-29	Aug27
John 6:29	Jun03
John 6:37	Sep01
John 6:44	Feb14
	Sep01
John 6:58-60	Oct17
John 6:60-64	Oct07
John 7:17	Sep26
John 7:41-42	Oct15
John 8:23	May05
	May07
	Jun24
	Dec30
John 8:32	Jul26
	Aug11
John 9:25	Mar25
John 9:39	Mar30
John 10:34	Sep06
John 11:25	Feb21
	Feb24
	Jun21
John 12:9	Dec11
John 14:2	Aug29
John 14:6	Jan02
	Feb17
	Apr13
	Jul04
	Nov18
John 14:16	Mar15
John 14:17	May02
	Oct07
	Dec02

John 14:18	Mar16
John 14:26	Oct02
John 14:27	Apr16
John 14:29	Mar18
John 15:4	Jul14
John 15:5	Jan23
	May25
John 15:7	May26
	Nov12
John 15:12	Oct26
John 15:26	Mar13
John 16:7	May02
John 16:8	Apr09
John 16:13	Jan31
	Mar15
	Jul11
	Sep20
John 16:21	Jan28
John 16:21-22	Mar17
John 17:3	Sep09
John 20:22	Mar14
John 23:3-5	Mar22
Acts 1:5	Nov04
Acts 1:8	May24
	Jun17
	Jul11
Acts 2:36	May03
Acts 17:30-31	Dec03
Acts 19:13-15	Nov13
Rom. 1:1-3	Jan17
Rom. 1:3	May01
Rom. 1:5	Jul12
Rom. 1:16	Jan02
	Jun13
Rom. 1:17	Jun14
Rom. 1:18	Apr03
Rom. 2:4	Apr12
Rom. 2:13	Mar01
Rom. 3:19-21	Feb29
Rom. 3:21	Jun01
Rom. 3:21-22	Jul13
Rom. 5:10	Mar12
	Apr24
	May21
	Jul17
	Sep23
	Sep24

	Oct22
Rom. 5:19	Dec27
Rom. 6:1	Mar07
Rom. 6:3	Feb23
	Feb24
Rom. 6:4-5	Jun23
Rom. 6:5	May19
	Feb02
Rom. 6:6	Jan04
	Feb22
	Jul16
	Aug06
	Dec24
Rom. 6:6-7	Feb25
Rom. 6:8	Feb26
Rom. 6:9-12	Feb27
Rom. 6:23	Apr25
Rom. 7:18-19	Aug17
Rom. 7:24	Aug18
Rom. 7:24-25	Aug15
Rom. 8:1	Apr08
Rom. 8:1-2	Aug06
Rom. 8:5	Aug09
Rom. 8:6	Aug10
Rom. 8:6-9	Aug07
	Aug08
Rom. 8:9-11	May06
Rom. 8:10	Sep05
	Sep21
	Dec24
Rom. 8:14	Jan16
	Aug12
Rom. 8:16	Aug13
Rom. 8:17	Aug14
Rom. 8:17-18	Dec22
Rom. 8:19	Nov11
Rom. 8:23	Aug16
Rom. 8:28-29	Oct14
Rom. 8:29	Jan11
	May24
	Jul26
	Jul11
	Sep02
	Oct01
	Oct27
	Dec22
Rom. 8:31	Dec15

	<u>Dec21</u>
<u>Rom. 8:32</u>	<u>Jan03</u>
	<u>Mar02</u>
	<u>Apr07</u>
	<u>Sep02</u>
	<u>Sep04</u>
	<u>Oct10</u>
<u>Rom. 9:17</u>	<u>Nov02</u>
<u>Rom. 9:18</u>	<u>Nov01</u>
<u>Rom. 10:17</u>	<u>Jan29</u>
	<u>Mar04</u>
	<u>Dec09</u>
<u>Rom. 12:1</u>	<u>Feb10</u>
	<u>Jul20</u>
	<u>Jul21</u>
	<u>Jul22</u>
<u>Rom. 12:2</u>	<u>Jul23</u>
	<u>Jul24</u>
	<u>Jul26</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:17</u>	<u>Apr30</u>
	<u>May12</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:18</u>	<u>May10</u>
	<u>May11</u>
	<u>May13</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:24</u>	<u>Feb21</u>
	<u>Feb28</u>
	<u>Aug12</u>
	<u>Nov09</u>
	<u>Feb02</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:29-30</u>	<u>Jan10</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:29-31</u>	<u>Sep16</u>
<u>I Cor. 1:30</u>	<u>Jan26</u>
	<u>Feb09</u>
	<u>Jun01</u>
	<u>Jul13</u>
	<u>Jul28</u>
	<u>Aug02</u>
	<u>Aug06</u>
	<u>Sep17</u>
<u>I Cor. 2:4-5</u>	<u>Jun12</u>
<u>I Cor. 2:9</u>	<u>Oct28</u>
<u>I Cor. 2:10</u>	<u>Jun26</u>
<u>I Cor. 2:14</u>	<u>Jun25</u>
<u>I Cor. 2:16</u>	<u>Jun26</u>
<u>I Cor. 3:10-15</u>	<u>Dec13</u>
<u>I Cor. 3:12-14</u>	<u>Jun05</u>
<u>I Cor. 3:16</u>	<u>Dec29</u>

I Cor. 4:1	Oct23
I Cor. 4:1-2	Sep14
I Cor. 6:9	Sep18
I Cor. 6:17	Jan05
	Feb24
	Feb28
	May04
	Jun21
	Jun23
	Aug03
	Aug07
	Aug13
	Aug16
	Aug17
	Jul11
	Aug31
	Sep04
	Sep11
	Sep20
	Oct10
	Nov17
	Dec07
I Cor. 6:19	Jul21
	Sep14
I Cor. 10:12	Jun29
I Cor. 10:13	Jun30
I Cor. 11:19	Jul03
I Cor. 11:29-30	Nov22
I Cor. 11:31-32	Nov23
I Cor. 11:32	Nov24
I Cor. 12:3	Sep12
I Cor. 13:12	Jul19
	Aug15
	Oct24
	Oct28
I Cor. 15:10	Jun08
I Cor. 15:22	Feb11
I Cor. 15:25	May21
I Cor. 15:29-30	May23
I Cor. 15:35-36	May20
I Cor. 15:42-44	Dec24
I Cor. 15:45	Feb19
	Feb20
	May19
I Cor. 15:51	Jun23
I Cor. 15:54-57	Jan20
II Cor. 1:8-9	Mar21

	Nov07
II Cor. 1:9	Nov10
II Cor. 1:20	Oct10
II Cor. 1:24	Aug24
	Aug26
II Cor. 3:1-3	Jun18
II Cor. 3:17	Sep20
	Oct02
II Cor. 4:1	Jan18
	Aug26
II Cor. 4:1-2	Oct23
II Cor. 4:5-11	Dec11
II Cor. 4:7	Feb02
	Feb12
	May10
	Dec11
II Cor. 4:10	Jan10
	Dec12
II Cor. 4:10-12	Jan18
	Feb11
	Feb12
	May24
	Jun18
	Aug14
	Sep11
	Dec13
II Cor. 4:11	Jul22
II Cor. 4:11-12	Dec10
II Cor. 4:12	May23
	Aug26
II Cor. 4:16-18	Dec12
II Cor. 5:14	Apr24
	Jul17
II Cor. 5:16-17	Aug21
	Aug22
II Cor. 5:17	Jan06
	Feb02
	Feb20
	May08
	May18
	Nov17
	Dec19
	Dec30
II Cor. 5:17-18	Oct19
II Cor. 5:18-19	Oct22
II Cor. 5:19	May28
	May29

II Cor. 5:21	<u>Oct21</u>
II Cor. 7:10	<u>Apr10</u>
	<u>Jul31</u>
II Cor. 10:8	<u>Aug25</u>
	<u>Aug26</u>
II Cor. 12:9-10	<u>Feb02</u>
	<u>Feb21</u>
	<u>Feb28</u>
II Cor. 13:5	<u>Feb03</u>
	<u>Jun08</u>
Gal. 1:6	<u>May01</u>
Gal. 1:6-7	<u>Jan26</u>
Gal. 1:15-16	<u>Apr21</u>
Gal. 1:16	<u>Jan15</u>
	<u>Jul30</u>
Gal. 2:20	<u>Jan04</u>
	<u>Jan10</u>
	<u>Feb23</u>
	<u>Jun08</u>
	<u>Jul27</u>
	<u>Jul28</u>
Gal. 2:21	<u>Jan26</u>
	<u>Feb08</u>
	<u>Mar05</u>
	<u>Jul29</u>
	<u>Jul30</u>
	<u>Dec27</u>
Gal. 3:1	<u>Feb08</u>
Gal. 3:2-3	<u>Mar06</u>
Gal. 3:3	<u>May01</u>
	<u>Mar02</u>
Gal. 3:11-12	<u>Jul10</u>
Gal. 3:12	<u>Jun01</u>
Gal. 3:16	<u>Aug29</u>
	<u>Nov19</u>
Gal. 3:17	<u>May14</u>
Gal. 3:19	<u>Jun02</u>
	<u>Aug29</u>
Gal. 3:24-25	<u>Dec02</u>
Gal. 3:26-29	<u>Nov19</u>
Gal. 4:19	<u>Jan11</u>
	<u>Feb28</u>
	<u>Mar06</u>
	<u>Mar26</u>
	<u>Mar29</u>
	<u>Apr14</u>
	<u>Apr20</u>

	May24
	May31
	Jun21
	Jul26
	Jul11
	Jul30
	Aug14
	Sep02
	Sep08
	Sep20
	Sep24
	Sep30
	Oct01
	Oct10
	Oct27
	Nov18
	Nov24
	Dec22
	Dec28
Gal. 5:4	Jan26
	Feb08
	May30
	Jul09
	Jul29
Gal. 5:16	Sep21
	Sep22
Gal. 5:16-17	Aug19
Gal. 5:17	Aug07
Gal. 5:19-21	Aug20
Gal. 5:22-23	Oct28
Gal. 5:25	Sep20
Gal. 6:14	May16
	May17
Gal. 6:15	Jun15
Eph. 1:3	Jan03
	Aug30
	Aug31
	Oct10
Eph. 1:4-5	Sep01
Eph. 1:9-10	Nov11
Eph. 1:14	Jul19
Eph. 1:16-18	Mar29
	Nov03
Eph. 1:17-18	Jan15
Eph. 1:19-20	Nov10
Eph. 1:22-23	Nov11
Eph. 2:3	Oct06

	<u>Dec30</u>
Eph. 2:7	<u>Nov11</u>
Eph. 2:8-10	<u>Mar05</u>
	<u>Jul09</u>
Eph. 4:13-14	<u>Sep30</u>
Eph. 3:14-15	<u>Sep06</u>
Eph. 4:4	<u>May06</u>
Eph. 4:11-12	<u>Jan24</u>
Eph. 4:12	<u>Sep28</u>
Eph. 4:12-16	<u>Jul11</u>
Eph. 4:13	<u>Apr19</u>
	<u>Sep29</u>
Eph. 4:20-21	<u>Oct01</u>
Eph. 6:10-14	<u>Jan08</u>
Phil. 2:5	<u>Apr18</u>
	<u>Aug12</u>
Phil. 2:6-8	<u>Feb19</u>
Phil. 3:3	<u>Nov20</u>
Phil. 3:4-6	<u>Feb07</u>
Phil. 3:8-9	<u>Feb07</u>
	<u>Feb08</u>
	<u>Feb09</u>
	<u>Jun11</u>
	<u>Jul30</u>
Phil. 3:8-11	<u>Nov21</u>
Phil. 3:10	<u>Apr14</u>
	<u>Aug14</u>
Phil. 3:10-11	<u>Jul01</u>
Phil. 3:12	<u>Dec20</u>
Phil. 3:20-21	<u>Dec23</u>
Phil. 4:19	<u>Apr27</u>
Col. 1:3-4	<u>Sep24</u>
Col. 1:19	<u>Dec14</u>
	<u>Dec29</u>
Col. 1:24	<u>May23</u>
	<u>Dec10</u>
Col. 1:26	<u>Jan01</u>
Col. 1:26-27	<u>May02</u>
Col. 1:27	<u>Jan01</u>
	<u>Jan03</u>
	<u>Feb12</u>
	<u>Feb24</u>
	<u>Jul13</u>
	<u>Jul11</u>
	<u>Aug02</u>
	<u>Aug14</u>
	<u>Aug15</u>

	<u>Aug16</u>
	<u>Sep03</u>
	<u>Sep10</u>
	<u>Sep11</u>
	<u>Sep20</u>
	<u>Sep24</u>
	<u>Sep30</u>
	<u>Oct27</u>
	<u>Dec02</u>
	<u>Dec22</u>
	<u>Dec28</u>
Col. 1:27-28	<u>May01</u>
Col. 2:3	<u>Jan13</u>
	<u>Sep03</u>
	<u>Sep09</u>
	<u>Oct10</u>
Col. 2:8-9	<u>Jan13</u>
Col. 2:9	<u>Feb19</u>
	<u>May04</u>
	<u>Jul19</u>
	<u>Aug03</u>
Col. 2:9-10	<u>Jan13</u>
	<u>Sep02</u>
	<u>Sep03</u>
	<u>Sep04</u>
Col. 2:17	<u>Dec02</u>
Col. 2:19	<u>Sep28</u>
Col. 3:3-4	<u>Sep04</u>
Col. 3:4	<u>Jan13</u>
	<u>Feb21</u>
	<u>Jul13</u>
	<u>Aug03</u>
	<u>Aug16</u>
	<u>Sep20</u>
	<u>Sep24</u>
	<u>Oct19</u>
I Tim. 2:4	<u>Nov01</u>
	<u>Dec03</u>
	<u>Dec15</u>
I Tim. 2:5	<u>Jan21</u>
	<u>Nov18</u>
	<u>Mar31</u>
II Tim. 1:7	<u>Jun16</u>
II Tim. 2:13	<u>Oct05</u>
II Tim. 3:7	<u>Oct01</u>
II Tim. 3:15-16	<u>Nov03</u>
II Tim. 4:3-4	<u>Oct03</u>

II Tim. 4:4	Oct04
Titus 2:11-13	Jul31
Heb. 1:1-2	Jan14
	May09
Heb. 2:1	May14
Heb. 2:12	Sep28
Heb. 2:14-15	Feb22
Heb. 3:6	Dec05
Heb. 3:12	Mar31
Heb. 3:14	Dec05
Heb. 4:9-10	Aug28
Heb. 4:11	Aug27
Heb. 4:12	May08
	May09
	Aug07
Heb. 4:13	Aug21
Heb. 5:14	Mar26
Heb. 6:1	Apr11
Heb. 6:4-6	Sep27
Heb. 8:8-12	Dec02
Heb. 8:10	Apr20
Heb. 8:10-11	Jan25
Heb. 9:14	Jul09
Heb. 9:27	Dec04
Heb. 10:1	May27
	Dec02
Heb. 10:1-3	Dec01
Heb. 10:19-20	Jul16
Heb. 10:22-23	Jul15
Heb. 11:1	Mar04
	Dec09
Heb. 11:6	Jul18
Heb. 11:13	Jul19
Heb. 11:16	Dec30
Heb. 12:5-6	Aug29
Heb. 12:6	Apr02
Heb. 12:24	Jan25
Heb. 13:7	Aug26
Jas. 1:13-15	Jun27
Jas. 1:14-15	Jun28
Jas. 2:19	Sep07
Jas. 2:26	Jul08
I Pet. 1:7	Jan30
	Jun29
I Pet. 1:22	Oct28
I Pet. 2:24	Mar11
	May15

I Pet. 4:17	Nov25
I Pet. 5:6	Nov26
I Pet. 5:7	Nov27
I Pet. 5:8-10	Nov28
I Pet. 5:10	Dec14
I Pet. 5:11	Nov29
II Pet. 1:2	Apr15
II Pet. 1:20	Jan27
II Pet. 3:18	Aug10
	Sep02
I John 1:5	Apr13
I John 1:7	Aug11
	Dec15
I John 1:8	Jan07
I John 1:9	Mar09
I John 1:10	Mar09
I John 2:26-27	Jan22
	Nov14
I John 3:2	Oct28
I John 3:8	Nov30
I John 3:14	Oct27
I John 4:1-4	Sep10
	Sep11
I John 4:8	Apr03
I John 4:9	Oct31
I John 4:10	Apr04
I John 4:18	Jun16
I John 4:19	Apr05
	Jun07
	Jun10
I John 5:4	Jan19
	Jun22
I John 5:9-11	May09
	Jun19
	Nov12
II John 1:9	Feb16
Jude 1:4	Aug01
Rev. 3:21	Aug13
Rev. 12:11	Jun17
	Jun20
Rev. 19:10	Jun17
Rev. 21:3	Dec29

