MORE REEL TESTIMONIES OF JESUS

Scripts, Scribes, and Insights of His Preeminence in Scripture and All Life

A Free, Interactive PDF “Phone” Book

Kirk W. McCrea

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Cover photograph by Kirk McCrea.

To my brothers and sisters in Jesus
who hear His voice
and do the will of His Father
and our Father

CONTENTS

Introduction	9	Poison-Antidote	27
Scripts of Posted Videos	10	Self-Help	28
		Blind Faith	29
Bland	11	Life and Death	30
Proselytes	12	Deconstruction	31
Bragging Rights	13	Arthur Blessitt	32
Perfected in Weakness	14	The GOAT	33
		Armchair-Quarterbacks	34
Justice Jesus	15		
Stand Up to Hate	16	Spewed Out	35
Once Saved, Always Saved	17	Reciprocity	36
		Tabitha	37
A Friend of Sinners	18	Perfect Partial Faith	38
Worthless and Lazy	19	When God Sees Me	39
Tis the Season	20	Ungospeled	40
Believe-Obey	21	Buried Talents	41
Christ in Christmas	22	Only the Losers Win	42
The Scrooge Church	23	Armchair	43
		Lawless Grace	44
Christmas Pagans	24	The Righteous Judge 2	45
The Ebenezer Christian	25	Jesus is God	46
The Eternal New Years Baby	26	Justice!	47
		Sinfluencers	48

Video Scripts Continued
Apostasy 49
Immorality 50
Victimhood Christianity 51
Red-Letter Christians 52
WDJTCWJ? 53
Food Delivery Quality 54
Platitudes 55
Eternal Security 56
William Booth Greetings 57
Intrusive Thoughts 58
The Righteous Judge 3 59
Conditional Rewards 60
Defense 61
In Christ Jesus 62
The One 63
#1 Cutting Off Sin #2 Replace With Righteousness 64
Doubting Salvation 65
"Hate His Own Life…" 66
Passover 67
"How, then, shall we live?" 68
Imitation Proxy 69
Celebration 70
Imagine 71
Church Leaders 72
Christian Tattoos 73
Prodigal Mocker 74
Walk on Waves 75
Fellowship 76
Living Faith 77
Thief on the Cross 78
Blowing Smoke 79
The Epitome 80
The Embodiment 81
True Religion 82
Preparation 83
Manifest Jesus 84
Head of the Church 85
Overflow 86
Theology of Faith 87
Diet 88
Conditional Love 89
Authority 90
One Flesh 91
Wilting 92
ReMarriage, 93
Father's Day 94
Barbarism 95
Behavioral Modification 96
Hearing Aid 97
Bunker Buster 98
Tsunamis 99
Believers 100
Repent 101
Surrender 102
Follow 103
Asleep 104
Eye-Site 105
Excuses 2 106

Video Scripts Continued
Heaven's Constitution 110
Christian Narcissism 111
Theophobia 112
Kiss Cam 113
Faith on Earth 114
A Blessed Curse 115
Forgiving 116
Not Perfect 117
Breakdown 118
Poor in Spirit 119
Unbelieving Perspectives 120
Suffering 2 121
First-Last Pleasing 122
Early Faith 123
The Widow's Mite 124
Hospital for Sinners 125
Pentateuch 126
Fast in Secret 127
Justice 2 128
Laodicea 129
Labor Day 130
Truth 131
Mamma god 132
Confess Jesus 133
No "Great Again" 134
Floods 135
Peacemakers 136
Wide Path 137
What if? 138
Enemies 2 139
Rapture 140
Self-Righteousness 141
Deception of Legalism 142
Persecuted for Right 143
Homeschool Christian 144
God's Will 145
Spooky 146
Object-ive Faith 147
Poor in Spirit 2 148
Sola Scriptura 149
Solus Christos 150
Scary Love 151
Scary Reform 152
Scary Ist 153
Index 154
About the Author 155
Back Cover 172

"For the testimony of Jesus
is the spirit of prophecy."
(Revelation 19:10c)

"And Jesus said to them,
'Therefore every scribe who has become
a disciple of the kingdom of heaven
is like a head of a household,
who brings out of his treasure
things new and old.'"
(Matthew 13:52)

INTRODUCTION

Christianity is about believing Jesus to pursue His path to perfection in one's life, no matter how imperfectly. This path is the only way to love God with everything and to love one's neighbor. Christianity is about believing Jesus' red-letter teachings and commandments, literally and personally, since, *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples"* (John 15:8). Christianity is about believing His red-letter warnings and impending judgments, literally and personally, to be guided, protected, and rescued back to His teachings and commandments. Christianity is about rejoicing that Jesus has provided atonement for sins so that we can pursue His path of perfection to draw close to God. Christianity is about living out the good works that God has prepared for each person (Eph 2:10), about fellowshipping with Jesus in His sufferings (Phil 3:12), and about doing our share in supplementing Christ's afflictions in His body, the church (Col 1:24). Christianity is about yoking our lives to Jesus' life how He told us and showed us in order to *"find rest for your souls"* (Mat 11:29), have His *"joy may be made full"* (John 15:11) and dwell in the *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful* (John 14:27).

SCRIPTS OF POSTED VIDEOS

Bland

You've been a Christian for a long time and have done everything expected, but your spiritual life feels bland, incomplete, and going nowhere. You can try praying harder, reading the Bible more, or worshiping more sincerely, but these things were never the main purpose of being "born again." Although you were not born again BY good works, you were created to DO the good works that Jesus taught and commanded in His sermons. We are created to care for "the least of these," the marginalized, the lonely, and the hungry. We are to confess Him, forgive others to be forgiven, be peacemakers, be the good Samaritan, turn the other cheek, and teach others all that that He commanded. We were made to be His priests and ministers to each other and the world, and that ministry - those good works, will glorify Him forever.

"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10 NASB)

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16 NASB)

Proselytes

What if, in the modern church, the Bible's "precepts of men" sounded like: "we don't need to work because of His finished work, Jesus was perfect so we don't have to be, don't try so hard, God doesn't call us to suffer, God does not need us to please Him, God loves me just the way I am, Jesus meets us where we are, there's no fear, guilt, or shame when you're in Jesus, and we're all heirs and we all get a crown?" What if, spiritually, we can be born again because of His death, but we can only grow up again by dying to self for Him? What if any other path will be considered as still born or illegitimate? We must read the Gospels again.

"'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN. Neglecting the commandment of God [Jesus], you hold to the tradition of men.'…'You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God [Jesus] *in order to keep your tradition'" (Mark 7:7-9 NASB)*

Bragging Rights

There's not much boasting when following Jesus' righteousness. Few are going to pray in secret or give to the poor in secret and then brag about it. Most aren't going to boast of their humiliation when they seek the last place, don't resist an evil person, or turn the other cheek to be struck again. No one's going to say how cool they are by loving those who hate and persecute them. And no one's going to pick up their cross to bear other's burdens, love those who don't love them, and endure the public rejection and contempt of Jesus in order to say, "hey, check me out!" Jesus' command to "be perfect" in following Him isn't impossible, but nobody in their earthly mind wants anything to do with that kind of "perfect" life.

"And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone'" (Mark 10:18)

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way" (Luke 6:26 NASB)

"we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now" (1 Corinthians 4:13b NASB)

Perfected in Weakness

The phrase, *"My power is perfected in weakness"* has become an excuse for sin and love of the world rather than as a promise of strength for a Christian life that is utterly poured out to follow Jesus. Paul got this answer after being severely handicapped by poor eyesight and after traversing a harsh, undeveloped world for decades through numerous life-threatening situations. God's promise of power is for eternal fruit-bearing-glory to those who are willing to lay down their lives by heeding Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. It's not a justification for the weaknesses of personal appetites and instabilities by those seeking to be saved without repentance.

"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10 NASB)

Justice Jesus

Although the church constantly recreates Jesus as a defender of whatever flavor of life, world view, or injustice they want, Jesus will have the final say to each person at His judgment, and He has laid out those judgments in His teachings, commandments, and warnings. Saving faith will be the faith we exercised to live out His holiness and righteousness in our lives. For instance, our forgiveness will be based on, *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions"* (Mat 6:14,15). His mercy to us will be based on, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy"* (Mat 5:7). He provides His blood to forgive our sins in order to believe Him; He doesn't provide it to not believe Him. That is His justice and He is Just.

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS." (Matthew 16:27 NASB)

"and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:29 NASB)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB)

Stand Up to Hate

Jesus didn't command His followers to stop the hate of others, but to stop it within themselves. He didn't command His followers to stand up to hate, but to turn the other cheek when slapped physically or verbally, to go another mile after forced to go one, to give your shirt when your coat is taken, to pray for those who persecute you, to bless those who curse you, to love those who do not love you, to not return evil for evil, to love your enemies, and to lose your life to gain it. Unfortunately, hate is as diverse as the world, and "justice" is to hate those who are thought to hate you. Jesus, however, defines true hate as those who hate the light because the light reveals that their deeds are evil. He defines true love in those willing to endure till the end to show His true light.

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Matthew 24:9 NASB)

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18 NASB)

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man" (Luke 6:22 NASB)

Once Saved, Always Saved

Is it "once saved, always saved"? Can one lose their salvation? Many people want a ticket out of hell but have no desire to be God's legitimate children by following His Son. But Jesus still loves these people and that's why He continues to warn them saying, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord'…,"* and *"I never knew you, depart from Me…,"* and that half the "virgins" were denied entrance into His kingdom, and that the "goats who didn't" rather than the "sheep who did" were sent into eternal fire, and that the unforgiving servant 's "forgiven debt" was revoked and the servant jailed, and that He will spew out the Lukewarm, and that He will erase one's name from the book of life, and that those who don't confess Him or judge others or don't show mercy, etc. will reap what they've sown.

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9a NASB)

"Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals," (1 Corinthians 6:9b NASB)

"nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." (1Corinthians 6:10 NASB)

A Friend of Sinners

What if the church could win over nonbelievers by fostering friendships and building community? What if identifying with people, sharing their struggles and heartaches, and being there to hold the hand of those in need were the best ways of showing them Jesus? What if that's because Jesus "is a friend of sinners"? What if, however, it wasn't very nice to call someone a demon possessed, schizophrenic, psychopath? What if it wasn't very nice to say that they liked to hang out with fat, intoxicated drunks? What if calling Jesus "a friend of sinners" had been part of those insulting, contemptuous, and blasphemous accusations, and the church was now using it as a motto for its mission? What if Jesus' expectation to repent according to all His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments were replaced by the "precepts of church's" sin-condoning, sin-enabling, hyper-grace, "it's all good," and "everyone does it" theology?

"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:20 NASB)

"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4 NASB)

Worthless and Lazy

Church teaches that, "We're all sinners, nobody's perfect, stop being morally superior, Jesus provides a finished work so we don't have to, God loves you just the way you are, and don't try so hard." Jesus, however, teaches that His judgments will include, "*But his master answered and said to him, 'You worthless, lazy slave! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter seed? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore: take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents'"* (Matthew 25:26-28). Grace is given as an investment to manifest His holiness and righteousness to the world; it is not given to be a "worthless, lazy slave."

"For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away" (Matthew 25:29 NASB)

"And throw the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30 NASB)

Tis the Season

Tis the season – for Evangelicals to show their vast knowledge while not having a clue on what Jesus says are His ways of eternal life (apart from Him being their free heavenly doormat of sin). "Christmas is bad, Halloween is bad, good works are bad, that church is bad, those things are idolatry." They want the Jesus who is the free gift but not the Jesus Who says being My Father's true children will cost you everything. They stand on the written word of God, but they stand on sand without the Living Word's teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. They want to not be under God's law but not by believing and acting on Jesus' ways, which are the fulfillment of His law. They want His "peace that surpasses understanding," His forgiveness of sins, His joy made complete, His rest for their souls, and His eternal security, but not by following His conditions, expectations, and narrow path that bring them.

"Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:24 NASB)

"Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets' (Luke 13:26 NASB)

"and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS'" (Luke 13:27 NASB)

Believe-Obey

Can you imagine the state of Christianity if conditional verses like, *"Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy"* and *"forgive, and you will be forgiven"* were as important to Jesus for entering His kingdom as His conditional verse, *"you must be born again"*? What if, *"there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"* meant no condemnation for those seeking to live *in* Christ Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments? How many in the church are building their lives on the sand rather than on the rock if the "rock" were actually hearing and *acting* on *"these words of Mind"* – Jesus' red-letter expectations of what a real Christian will look like? Who is training by how He said to "endure to the end," *"He who overcomes…," "you have kept the word of My Perseverance,"* and those who *"did not love their life even when faced with death"*? What if *belief* in Jesus will be proven by our *obedience* to Him?

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36 NASB)

"See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven" (Hebrews 12:25 NASB)

Christ in Christmas

What if it's too late to put Christ *back* in Christmas because the church has already replaced Him *with* Christmas? The church wants God's free gift of salvation, but they reserve the right to use or not use the gift according to their choice of precepts and doctrines. They don't want the Gift's instructions requiring them to confess Him in a hateful world, forgive others to be forgiven, seek the last place, bear other's burdens, take care of *"the least of these,"* and that it will cost you everything. Besides, there are many "Christmas" free-gift scriptures about grace, mercy, and forgiveness. They already know that they're heirs in Christ, rich and wealthy in His grace, and need nothing but His finished work. The Gift's instructions are unnecessary about how to be heirs by suffering with Him, how to not be spewed from His mouth, how to endure to the end, and how to not love their lives even when faced with death.

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Matthew 24:9 NASB)

"At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another" (Matthew 24:10 NASB)

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death" (Mark 13:12 NASB)

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mark 13:12-13 NASB)

The Scrooge Church

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is an excellent depiction of repenting from the covetousness, contempt, and self-love that goes against God and one's neighbor. While the church embraces the idea of "repentance," it certainly rejects the requirement for good works following that repentance since "Jesus paid it all," "you're not under the law but grace," "you're only a sinner saved by grace," "you're not perfect just forgiven," "there is no good that dwells in you," and "you're saved by faith not by works." This is what 500 years of Christianity looks like when its teachings comes from 1) "protest-anting" others, 2) focusing on the apostles' rather than Jesus' teachings, 3) downplaying or ignoring all Jesus' New Covenant conditions, and 4) emphasizing God's promises and grace, minus the conditions, to make it possible to be forgiven by faith in doctrines rather than faith to believe Jesus' warnings and judgments to bear fruit from His teachings and commandments for eternal life.

"Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8 NASB)

"The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:10 NASB)

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8 NASB)

Christmas Pagans

You'll have to forgive many Christians for trashing Christmas in every way they can because Christmas isn't "evangelical." It doesn't contain anything about being born again or the propitiation of sins and, perhaps worse, it's about giving to others and "good works," and these are in conflict with God's free gift of "grace," "forgiveness," "love," and "freedom" that require only acceptance by faith and not by living out. Even Martin Luther dismissed the book of James with all its faith-is-evidenced-*by*-works as "an epistle of straw." The incarnate God born on straw, however, later spent three years teaching and commanding what faith will look like from the heart, with warnings and judgments about what happens if it doesn't. God's gift to the world also includes peace, purpose, and power through His Son's instructions on how to use it, but "willingness to do so" is not included.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

The Ebenezer Christian

As bright and beautiful as the *Christmas Carol* depicts a new life of repenting and giving (and it is), it doesn't delve into Jesus' teachings of "carrying one's cross in a dark world for the rest of one's life". It doesn't examine the possibility for Ebenezer that his housekeeper still stole; or that his family and peers don't forgive him for what he put them through; or that rich businessmen take advantage of him; or that he loses everything or becomes lame or ill; or that, even with care, Tiny Tim still dies. Jesus' teachings are packed with the difficulties of being a light in a dark world while continuing to give, seemingly, beyond one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. But God's promises are for the sharing of His "narrow path of life" and for the "fellowship of His suffering". Although His call to follow His Son is difficult, it will be only a blink of an eye that will open up into His eternal glory.

"and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;" (1 Corinthians 4:12 NASB)

"when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now" (1 Corinthians 4:13 NASB)

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9 NASB)

The Eternal New Years Baby

The modern church limits Jesus' teachings of children to just being born again, and some even arrogantly use children, rather than themselves, as examples for a "sin nature." In contrast, Jesus warns that faith must start and progress as: *"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become* like *children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Mat 18:3), and He indicates that His whole kingdom will be composed of the child-like in, *"I praise You, Father,..., that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants'"* (Mat 11:25). Jesus told us, in many places, who will and who will not be great in His kingdom, and He often presented a child to teach, *"for the one who is* least *among all of you, this is the one who is* great*"* (Luk 9:48b) and, *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Mat 18:4). All His commandments are designed to make us *"become like children."*

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10 NASB)

"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5 NKJV)

"And Jesus said to them, 'Yes. Have you never read, "OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND NURSING INFANTS YOU HAVE PERFECTED PRAISE"'?" (Matthew 21:16 NKJV)

Poison-Antidote

The daily news of assassinations, killings, suicides, wars, and attritions. While these will only become worse, the world will provide the "soothing antidotes" through a plethora of immoralities, dissipations, and covetousness. These include, alcohol, marijuana, TV, social media, movies, entertainment, food, and not least, gaming. They will also provide their own moral code with it in, "stop hate," "anti-bigotry," "togetherness," "tolerance," and "inclusivity" but these attributes are only afforded to their followers. In contrast, a Christian suffering the world's poison is not soothed through a license for indulgence and sin but through the hope and promises of fellowshipping with Jesus in His suffering as their spirit denies the flesh and lives for Him. They are call to the eternal purpose of bringing Jesus as the world's antidote by loving one's enemies, denying self, confessing Him, and considering other's more important which fulfills picking up one's own cross and enduring till the end.

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" - "bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28 NASB)

"Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either" (Luke 6:29 NASB)

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them" - "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same" (Luke 6:32-33 NASB)

"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35 NASB)

Self-Help

The modern church would definitely steer away from "self-help" since *"all have sinned and fall short…"* and only God can help anyone. The church, though, still embraces the ideas of "forgive yourself," "love yourself," and "take care of yourself" with the reasoning that one can't forgive, love, and take care of others until they do. These concepts are not from Jesus' teachings but come from the "precepts of men" and the "doctrines of demons." The New Testament only teaches forgiveness through Jesus' blood, and Jesus made that contingent on forgiving others to maintain it (Mat 6:14-15, 18:21-35). Jesus even taught that His ways will result in hating one's life (Luke 14:26) since His ways, in every way, are self-emptying. Jesus' only path to "self-help" is:

"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (Luke 6:38).

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" (John 12:25)

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26)

Blind Faith

Since the beginning, Christians have needed to put their faith in the church rather than in Jesus. This eliminates accountability to God because 1) the church "knows," 2) the church "has authority," and 3) "I just follow the church." Church history is mostly about "my church is right and your church is wrong," and "we have the truth and you don't." It's never measured by a living faith in Jesus with "we forgive other's more, we're better (Good) Samaritans, we covet the world less, we seek the last place more, we're more child-like, or we lose our lives more for Jesus to gain them in Him than you do." (Also, because, those churches are trumpet less and don't let the left hand know,…etc.). No one is to tear up any tare so as to not damage those who truly believe in Jesus. Jesus, alone, disciples any individual (or church), and He tells us what saving faith should look like, what our hearts should look like, what our actions should look like, and what His judgment of us will look like.

"Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13 NASB)

"The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them" (Matthew 23:2-3 NASB)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB)

Life and Death

"Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead" is a hard statement by Jesus, but it fits with His other expectations of being a Christian; e.g., *"No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me,"* and, *"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."* He says these things because this world is only a stage of darkness and death for finding His light and life. He is life and the more one believes Him, the more life they will have. The church has doctrines but Jesus with His teachings and commandments are life itself.

"And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:27 NASB)

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10:30 NASB)

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28 NASB)

Deconstruction

Faith or Church deconstruction has been around for years, on top of many people just leaving the church and outright renouncing God and their faith. Deconstruction often denies the authority of the church, something even Jesus did not seek by removing the authority of the Pharisees and Scribes (Matt 23) (Judaism is still here). Rather, Jesus pointed to His Heavenly Father and Himself for true faith, true eternal life, and the only way to truly live. At some point, however, Jesus will judge the church and each believer to "deconstruct" their faith in Him to follow His sayings from faith only in the church and its doctrines. Jesus and His New Testament teachings are saturated with these warnings, like: the "sheep and the goats," the "good seed and the tares," the "virgins with or without enough oil," or the "Depart from Me, I never knew you" Christians. Don't tear up presumed tares, just start planting the good seed of His literal teachings in yourself and others.

"And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'

"But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.' (Matthew 13:28-29 NASB)

'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:30 NASB)

Arthur Blessitt

Arthur Blessitt died Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 after an amazing life carrying a 12 foot cross over 43k miles in more than 300 countries. He planted the seeds of Jesus' gospel to *"all nations"* so that they could be baptized *"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."* Jesus is still warning the church, however, that the "watering" of those seeds to *"make disciples"* by *"teaching them to observe all that I commanded you"* (Mat 28:20) would be a problem. They would ignore that those planted gospel seeds require His living water to forgive others to be forgiven, show mercy to receive it, turn the other cheek when slapped, care for the "least of these," confess Him, bear one another's burdens, and seek the last place. This is the only preparation to be one of the *"great multitude which no one could count"* (Rev 7:9a) that comes out of the great tribulation because, *"they did not love their life even when faced with death"* (Rev 12:11c).

"Many will fall away," "Lord, when did we see you…," "Lord, Lord, did we not…," "Lord, Lord, open up for us," "I will spew you out of My mouth," "I never knew you," "I will erase…," "he who endures to the end will…," "he who overcomes will…," "and it fell – and great was its fall"

The GOAT

The world judges who is the greatest of all time or MVP, and Jesus will do the same for Christians at His judgment, but with different criteria. *"Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all'"* (Mark 9:35), *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 18:4), *"But it is not this way with you* [the GOAT/MVP]*, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant"* (Luke 22:26), *"Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted"* (Matt 23:11-12), *"It* [the GOAT/MVP] *is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;* (Matt 20:26-27). *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it"* (Matt 16:25).

"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3 NASB)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the gentle, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers…" (Matthew 5:2-5, 7-9 NASB)

Armchair Quarterbacks

Jesus warns and warns about being just an "armchair quarterback" in calling Him Lord. While having enough knowledge is part of being a football fan, a Christian is called to actually participate in the spiritual warfare of light and darkness. Jesus' teachings, commandments, and warnings tell us how we are to participate but, in the modern church, it's like The Coach going up to the stands to coach players and yell out play calls with the expectation that the fans will then go onto the field and play. Instead, they will yell back, "Jesus' work is a finished work," "God loves me just the way I am," "by faith not by works," "His grace is all I need," "I believe the Bible," "I can't love others until I love myself," or "I'm already in His sabbath rest!" This wide path is not His narrow path of life, and not the life and death spiritual warfare for one's neighbors and for His "least of these," where nobody sets down to watch.

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46 NASB)

"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like…"

"But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like…" (Luke 6:47, 49a NASB)

"But they all alike began to make excuses…" (Luke 14:18a NASB)

Spewed Out

Politics will not affect the adulteries and other immoralities that have saturated the church, the nation, and the world. It's because of immorality, rather than politics, that God warns, *"For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants"* (Leviticus 18). The only way to prepare for the spewing is by hearing Jesus' red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments, and then believing them, literally, to live out as "saving faith" in Jesus (The Living Word) rather than as a passive faith in church doctrines (made from comfortable Bible precepts). These include: forgiving others, showing and wanting mercy for others, turning the other cheek, seeking the last place, not coveting, bearing other's burdens, loving one's enemies, and losing one's life for Jesus to gain it. His teachings are what will keep His true children on the rock when the land begins "spewing" and they are riddled with warnings to the church about what will happen, otherwise.

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Matthew 24:9 NASB)

"At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another" (Matthew 24:10 NASB)

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mark 13:13 NASB)

"and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (Revelation 12:11c NASB)

Reciprocity

One is not a follower of Jesus by just "loving Him more" but by, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (John 14:15). The church, however, says to follow Jesus by carrying a cross for Him in order to love Him with everything, and it isn't by what we do, but by how much we love and surrender everything to Him. Unfortunately, His specific commandments are ignored because we don't need to follow "rules" and it's not about what we do but about what's been done for us. In contrast, Jesus expects our "personal relationship" with Him to be a reciprocal of "all that's been done for us" according to His sacrificial, self-emptying, self-denying, humbling, humiliating, last place, and child-like teachings, commandments. The reciprocal of John 3:16 is John 14:15, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* which is the reciprocal of John 15:14, *"you are My friends if you do what I command you."*

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15 NASB)

"you are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14 NASB)

Tabitha

What if the Christian life was a "personal witness" rather than just "sharing the gospel?" What if, according to Jesus, it would mostly be like *"Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha ... this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did"* (Acts 9:36)? There is also, *"If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?"* (Matt 5:47a) and *"whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward"* (Mark 9:41) and dozens of other heart and hand teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments that Jesus said to follow Him so as to prove to be His disciples and to abide in His love (John 15:8,10). What if "sharing the gospel" without *"teaching them to observe all that I command you"* (Matt 28:20a) was found to be just another version of, *"Woe to you"* and *"Because you say…"*

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15 NASB)

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17 NASB)

Perfect Partial Faith

What if the first churches had no New Testament? What if Paul's letters were distributed to the churches before the gospels, and his letters were a preface to them on the perfect faith that would come by following all that Jesus said? What if Paul said, *"For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away"* (1 Cor 13:9-10), and the "perfect" was all that Jesus said, while the "partial" was the apostles' introductions? What if Paul also said that Jesus is *"the author and perfecter of faith"* (Heb 12:2), and *"faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of CHRIST"* (Rom 10:17)? What if, today, the word "God" is used in 100% of the latter verse's quotations even though the word "Christ" is in 99% of all Bible versions? What if the whole Bible *is* God's perfect *word*, but partial faith from knowing God's written word is way, way easier than pursuing perfect faith by believing and following God's Living Word, Jesus?

"So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine'" (John 8:31 NASB)

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23 NASB)

"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:24 NASB)

When God Sees Me

"When God sees me, He doesn't see sinful me but the righteousness of Jesus," and "God loves me just the way I am" are at the heart of a licentious, false Christianity that ignores much of Paul's and all of Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. "But we have Jesus' blood" is the same unaccountability doctrine of *"We have Abraham for our father'"* (Mat 3:9a) and negates, *"Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance"* (Mat 3:8) and *"The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Mat 3:10). Repentance followed by the good works of Jesus living through a person is denied as being judgmental, hurtful, unloving, and invalidating of the cross rather than the purpose of real faith in Jesus to share His yoke, take up one's cross, and follow Him to fellowship in His rest, peace, joy, and healing that brings light to a dark world and to our obstinate, sinful, flesh.

"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—"

"for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:12-13 NASB)

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17 NASB)

Ungospeled

Although the church is certainly supposed to broaden its outreach to "tax collectors and sinners" and to not see themselves as "above others," the outreach message has been changed from - repentance of sin - to love, acceptance, honor, recognition, and tolerance of others so as to not be like the Pharisees. The message of God's love has been changed from - His Son having to die for sin so people can repent and change - to God's unconditional love and acceptance for everyone with no mention of His day of judgment. The message is no longer to be forgiven of sin, stop sinning, and follow Jesus' ways to be healed, it's "Because you know you're loved, you will be able to live life to its fullest." The gospel has been "reworked" for decades to not appear "self-righteous," to get the world to *like* the church, and to allow the church to *love* the world.

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:30, 31a NASB)

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil" (John 7:7 NASB)

"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:20 NASB)

Buried Talents

Some people denounce having to live out Jesus' good works because it will lead to boasting. What they are saying is to bury one' s talent from Jesus as in, *"I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours"* (Matt 25:25) because they are also afraid of *"You are My friends if you do what I command you"* (John 15:14), *"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned"* (Luke 6:37), *"If someone slaps you, takes your coat, persecutes you, and hates you…" "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing … and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you"* (Matt 6:3-4), and because *"I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison and you…*did or did not*"* (Matt 25:31-46). Don't listen to the Christians who fear Jesus, listen to Jesus because *"whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it"* (Luke 9:24) and because He said:

"Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30 NASB)

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26 NASB)

Only the Losers Win

Only the Losers Win. *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it"* (Matthew 16:25); *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions"* (Luke 12:15); *"It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant"* (Matthew 20:26); *"If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"* (Matthew 5:47); *"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved"* (Mark 13:13).

"and when it [the dragnet] *was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous"* (Matthew 13:48-49).

Armchair

Although the world boasts of all its good works in conquering cancer, feeding the world, helping the world through AI, connecting people everywhere, stopping hate, and providing both comfort foods and weight reduction methods, a Christian's good works are Jesus living through them according to His teachings to "not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing," to give in secret, to bear other's burdens, to seek the last place, to turn the other cheek, to cease their own immorality, to take care of "the least of these," to visit the orphan and the widow, to desire mercy over judgment, to love those who don't love you, to love your enemies, to fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and to lose your life in Him to gain it. True Christians have no wish to be just armchair quarterbacks that worship Jesus, but actual players who do their part and take the pounding in the greatest and smallest ways, and always knowing that -

"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28 NASB)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

Lawless Grace

The modern church says, "God's grace and forgiveness replace His law," "He's freed us from that burden," and "When God sees me, He doesn't see sinful me but Jesus' forgiveness and righteousness that covers me." These are said because, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are* in Christ Jesus*"* (Rom 8:1). This, however, is Paul's teachings taken out of context from walking "in Christ Jesus'" teachings, and it has created a new religion that ignores what Jesus said saving faith will look like according to His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. "God's grace" apart from, rather than for following Jesus causes one to have an easy, on-the-sand faith in doctrines rather than a true, on-the-rock faith in Jesus - which is how God's law is fulfilled. That's why Jesus is still warning the church that He will say to many, *"I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS"* (Mat 7:23b).

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!" (Romans 6:15 NASB)

"for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13 NASB)

The Righteous Judge 2

If Jesus says that I must overcome and keep pursuing His deeds until the end in order to share His glory, I believe Him. If He says that I am dead because my deeds are incomplete and that I had better wake up to be found worthy of Him, I believe Him. If He says that I must overcome to not have my name erased and for Him to confess me to His Father, I believe Him. If He says that I must keep the "word of His perseverance" in order to be kept from the tribulation that will come upon the whole world, I believe Him. And if He says that I must hold to His ways in order to not lose the crown of life, I believe Him. Faith in Jesus and faith in church doctrines are not the same.

"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10 NASB)

Jesus is God

If Jesus is God, then why are none of His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments of the Gospels directly mentioned in 21 letters, written by 5 different authors (4 who knew and heard Jesus) to the churches? Wouldn't the direct words from God, while on earth, about how people are to show their faith and love to Him and His Father, to live with and love each other, and to prepare for eternity in the ways HE said be important for the churches to know? Why was it that the best they could come up with to direct the churches was, *"that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well"* (Acts 15:29)? It's like the Great Omission from the Great Commission which is, *"teaching them to observe all that I commanded you"* (Matt 28:20a). Yet, *"all scripture IS inspired by God…"* but real *"FAITH comes from hearing, and hearing by the words of Christ."*

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16 NASB)

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17 NASB)

Justice!

Jesus compares selfish verses self-denying faith in: *"will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night?"* (Luke 18:7b), *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8b). Christians and the church equate "faith" with waiting on God to deliver them, validate them, and take care of them or loved ones. Jesus, however, equates faith with believing all the specifics He said on how we are to lose our lives to gain them in Him; to forgive others to be forgiven, to show mercy to receive it, to seek the last place, to bear other's burdens, and to respond to injustice done to us by "turning the other cheek, going another mile, and giving your coat as well." It's way easier, however, to teach and listen to all God's promises and blessings apart from His conditions, Old Testament stories, cultural backgrounds and history, or what the original Greek words mean.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them" (Luke 6:32 NASB)

"If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same" (Luke 6:33 NASB)

"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35 NASB)

Sinfluencers

The Sin-fluencers on social media have far surpassed the sin-fluence of television. Old-school preachers denouncing "the devil" in tv and music are long gone, but what can you say when the promotion of immorality, self-love, self-justice, love of the world and the flesh, and the pride of life stand in stark contrast to the holiness and purity of God, and to His set-apart-call for ministering to the spiritual enslavement and its sufferings of others? Satan distributes the poison through the hurtfulness or rejection of others and then the false antidote through the lusts of the "injured flesh" – which just perpetuates the cycle with heightened malice, gossip, unforgiveness, bitterness, indignation and anger toward others (with its personal mental/emotional baggage). What if the media's sin-fluence constantly robbed Christians, like a "stumbling block," of His "peace that surpasses understanding," His "joy made complete," and His purpose to lose one's life in His ways to gain it?

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light" (Matthew 6:22 NASB)

"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Matthew 6:23 NASB)

"Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness" (Luke 11:35 NASB)

Apostasy

It's one thing to repent and cease from sin from suffering for Jesus, *"so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God"* (1 Peter 4:2), and another to repent to be *"under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live"* (Romans 8:12b-13), and another to pseudo-repent and follow *"ungodly persons* (modern pastors and churches) *who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ* (His teachings and commandments)*"* (Jude 1:4b), and still another to "get saved" without any repentance, but just believing that Jesus will forgive your sins and be with you on your life journey. *"for* (the Day of the Lord) *will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:3b NASB).*

"They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16 NASB)

"and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:29 NASB)

Immorality

One is either, by the Spirit, *"putting to death the deeds of the body"* (Romans 8:13b) or the deeds of the body are putting you to death. Immorality and other indulgences of the flesh seem momentarily harmless, except that they empower the rest of the attributes of the flesh: irritability, victimhood, jealousy, more greed, malice, impatience, dissipation, lethargy, bitterness, and anger which then prod the flesh of family, friends, and colleagues to continue the cycle. All this further leads the flesh to want more indulgence to sooth the mental, emotional, and physical damage of our own and other's sin. Repentance and striving for holiness in God's purity and Jesus' righteousness by living out His teachings, commandment, and warnings puts to death "the deeds of the body" and restores the fellowship of His peace, joy, and rest for one's soul.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7 NASB)

"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:8 NASB)

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." (Galatians 6:9 NASB)

Victimhood Christianity

There's a ubiquitous doctrine that, "if other's have always told me that I'm wrong or bad, then I can trust in a God who would never say that and loves me just as I am." Being a victim of the world's sin somehow entitles one to not be accountable to God for their own sin. That's a ridiculous made-up god that's removed all reasons for repenting to believe and follow Jesus. People sin against God and their neighbors (and family) which causes others to sin in in those ways which causes others to sin in those ways and so on. "Sin" is the poison that makes people "victims" of the world and justifies living for themselves to perpetuate the cycle. The cycle is only broken by recognizing our self-centered part in it to seek forgiveness through Jesus and then following Jesus to forgive others. That is why God's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness for others are eternally linked in

"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:14 NASB)

"But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:15 NASB) and,

"'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:33-35 NASB)

Red-Letter Christians

"Red-letter Christians" use scripture as much as "Black-letter Christians" – for their own political values and agendas for life on this earth, rather than in seeking to follow Jesus to become like Him and in building His heavenly, not earthly kingdom. The seeking of "Social Justice" or "Family Values and Traditions" are deceptions away from *"Do not love the world,"* seek the last place, forgive others to be forgiven, *"everyone who confesses Me before men…," "do not resist an evil person," "love your enemies," "beware of all forms of greed," "everyone who looks at a woman with lust...,"* and *"but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Although ALL scripture is true, "red-letter Christians" use parts of Jesus' teachings and "black-letter Christians" use parts of apostolic' teachings that suit their worldly value systems. Saving faith by believing Jesus as The Living Word, literally, and saving faith by agreeing with parts of The Written Word, figuratively, are not the same.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24 NASB)

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" (John 12:25 NASB)

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26 NASB)

WDJTCWJ?

What Would Jesus Do (WWJD)? The follow-up acronym of that movement was FROG: Fully Rely On God. Of course Jesus did that, but not by seeking His own life and trusting that God would bless Him and take care of Him through all life's difficulties. Jesus did not live His own life but the life His Father had for Him: to minister to "the least of these" and to explain Who His Father is and what He expects of His true children that seek life through His Son. God detailed through His Son HOW to love Him with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength and HOW that would look in loving one's neighbors. He also detailed the blessings that would follow, the difficulties that would follow, and the warnings and judgments that would follow in not pursuing Jesus' words. Saving faith is not "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD) or "Fully Rely on God" (FROG) but "What Did Jesus Teach, Command, and Warn about Judgment?" (WDJTCWJ).

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48 NASB)

"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak" (John 12:49 NASB)

"teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20 NASB)

Food Delivery

What if Jesus told us how it is we are to know Him and His Father? What if it wasn't through Bible study, church attendance, or prayer but through, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him"* (John 14:21)? What if finding intimate rest in Him had the condition of, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me"* (Matt 11:29)? What if Him knocking on the door of our hearts was never about "getting saved" but about repenting from spew-worthy precepts on "good works" in order to share, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34)? What if His food included taking care of "the least of these," bearing other's burdens, showing mercy to receive it, forgiving to be forgiven, seeking the last place, confessing Him, turning the other cheek, being a peacemaker, loving one's enemies, and losing one's life in His ways to gain it?

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart" (Luke 6:45 NASB)

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46 NASB)

"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like…" (Luke 6:47 NASB)

Quality

Everyone, throughout life, constantly replaces old ways with new ways. Things change from infancy to childhood to adulthood to elderly. Sometimes it's wanted, sometimes unexpected, and sometimes not wanted at all. The Christian life is no different except that the old things, an adoration for the world and the will of our flesh (against God's holiness), are replaced with living out Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments (with His righteousness). Likewise, sometimes it's wanted, unexpected, or not wanted at all. To stay on this path, however, Jesus must be constantly leading, while God is often disciplining but still providing.

"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins" (2 Peter 1:8-9 NASB)

Platitudes

The platitudes of "trust in the Lord rather than ourselves," "let go and let God," or "God take the wheel" are not the same as the teaching to "follow Jesus rather than ourselves" – especially through difficulties. While they sound like faith, they infer trusting the Lord with OUR lives rather than demonstrating faith to live out HIS life. Rather than trusting the Lord to keep our lives, we must entrust them to Him as we pursue His holiness, not loving the world, forgiving others, seeking the last place, caring for "the least of these," confessing Him, and loving one's enemies. Trusting without following is powerless and just another version of, *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46).

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25 NASB)

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21 NASB)

Eternal Security

Eternal security? In Jesus' parables He revoked His forgiveness of the unforgiving servant, took back the unused talent from the lazy servant, and threw both into their judgment. He said *"depart from Me"* to those in ministries, and warned those who hear but don't act on His Sermon on the Mount that they would be destroyed. He shut the door to those with lamps who didn't know the cost of keeping His light, and damned the goats who were blind to caring for "the least of these." He uninvited those to His wedding feast who were too busy with their own lives, and threw out the poorly dressed man at the feast (clean clothes equals righteous acts, Rev. 19:8). He sent the rich man to hell because he had his "comfort in full" and neglected Lazarus at his gate, and He warned about look-alike Christian tares among the wheat that will be burned at His harvest judgment. And He saturated the New Testament with such warnings for a modern church that has made up a new Christianity which doesn't have to deal with them.

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Revelation 3:5 NASB)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:6 NASB)

William Booth

What if, in the 1800's, William Booth said, "The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell?" What if, worse, the modern church wholeheartedly agrees with this statement, but doesn't recognize that their teaching has changed to validate, promote, and facilitate it? What if the only way around this was for Christians to rediscover what Jesus' ideas of "a personal relationship" are? What if this only happens by taking, literally and personally, His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments and then seeking to live them out.

"These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling." (John 16:1 NASB)

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23 NASB)

Greetings

Jesus is not our "hugger" at the entrance to heaven-mart. For, "*From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty"* (Rev 19:15). Therefore, His greetings on the wide path of destruction (e.g. "salvation" without seeking to live His holiness and righteousness) will be, *"I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS"* (Mat 7:21-23). In contrast, His greetings of *"Well done, good and faithful…"* are only for those who were like slaves in bearing fruit from His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments (e.g. His "works" that show salvation). Those who don't use it will lose it.

"Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents"

"Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:28, 30 NASB)

Intrusive Thoughts

Everyone seeking the holiness and righteousness of Jesus has conflictual intrusive thoughts from the world and the flesh. Otherwise, they are just normal thoughts and who cares. Intrusive thoughts, however, are part of the normal daily spiritual-life battle. Aside from, *"do not be conformed to…, but be transformed by…,"* the NT is packed with the specifics of how to do battle and to be daily renewed. The *mind* seeks the law of God to be fulfilled by seeking Jesus' narrow path, while the flesh never wavers from the law of sin (Rom 7:12-25). We are commanded to love God with all of our mind, and He searches our thoughts and knows our hearts as we follow, seek, and hope (or don't) (Rom 8:23-28). Jesus experienced the constant tug of the world and the flesh against His love of the Father, and told us to recognize it, take one day at a time, and seek after His kingdom and righteousness by all that He taught, because He has the failure part covered.

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace," (Romans 8:6 NASB)

"because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so," (Romans 8:7 NASB)

"and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8 NASB)

"we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5b NASB)

The Righteous Judge 3

If Jesus warns that I'm lukewarm towards having His good deeds live through me and that He'll therefore spew me out of His mouth, I believe Him. If He says that to Him I appear *wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked"* because I wrongly presume that I'm complete and rich in His mercy and grace, I believe Him. If He says that I'm required to buy from Him fire-refined gold (sharing of His perseverance and suffering), white garments (His good deeds living through me), and eye salve (to spiritually see and understand), I believe Him. And if He says that He stands at the door of my heart and knocks for me to repent of my indifference towards good works, I believe Him. Faith in Jesus and faith in church precepts are not the same.

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19 NASB)

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21 NASB)

Conditional Rewards

Some conditional rewards: *"To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God," "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life," "He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death," "To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it," "He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS," "He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels," "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name." "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne"* (Revelation 2-3, selected).

"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35 NASB)

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Matthew 16:27 NASB)

Defense

The church does not know how to handle the world's invading sin because it does not know how to address its own immorality, covetousness, and love of the world. Adultery, alone, has been defined by Jesus as looking in lust or as remarriage following divorce. Those things are too ubiquitous or too offensive to address and, besides, there's grace. As defined to Moses, however, adultery is just one immorality that will defile a land causing it to eventually spew out its inhabitants (Lev 18). As defined by Paul, it's just one immorality that will negate an inheritance of God's kingdom (1 Cor 6). An inheritance can be reclaimed by confessing and not repeating, and preparation for the eventual spewing can only be achieved by learning to live what Jesus preached in His Sermon on the Mount.

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21 NASB)

In Christ Jesus

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*"* (Rom 8:1), and *"by His doing you are* in Christ Jesus*, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption"* (1 Cor 1:30). Paul's use of "in Christ Jesus" has been isolated over the centuries to create a new Christianity devoid of actually being in Christ Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Jesus' covenant with the church of receiving and then giving back sacrificial love according to His words has been changed to a false unconditional love through church doctrines and precepts which keep the blessings part and ignore or negate the self-sacrificing parts of being "in Christ Jesus." Saving faith IS believing Jesus to repent and receive His forgiveness of sins – but then to also believe Him when He says things like:

"You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?" (Matthew 18:32-33 NASB)

"And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:34-35 NASB)

The One

Christians are meant to be disciples of Jesus, Himself, rather than disciples of a particular theology, denomination, pastor, or even one another (like this content). We should only "hear" three spiritual voices: 1) in our minds, recalling Jesus' words, commands, and actions, 2) in our hearts, being directed by the Holy Spirit on how to implement those commands in different situations, and 3) through our eyes by seeing the opportunities, discipline, and provision given to us by our heavenly Father. We should always evaluate the teaching or preaching of others as either a testimony of or distraction from Jesus, but we must pray, seek, hear, and see Him, alone, as if life depended on it.

"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5c NASB)

#1 Cutting Off Sin

Another church doctrinal precept says, "When you finally realize that it isn't about cutting off sin, it's about loving God so much your desires to sin no longer exist." Really? Then why didn't Jesus just say that instead of, *"do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you"* (John 5:14b), *"for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell"* (Matt 5:29b), *"My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart"* (Matt 18:35), *"But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"* (Luke 12:5), and *"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:5)? Although perfect love *will* cast out all fear of God's judgment, an active rather than passive stance against one's sins might be better until that love is perfect.

"for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13 NASB)

"all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28b-29 NASB)?

#2 Replacing With Righteousness

Many Christians love the precept, "When you finally realize that it isn't about cutting off sin, it's about loving God so much your desires to sin no longer exist." Really? That's fine as long as "loving God" is according to Jesus instructions of, *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you"* (Matt 6:14), *"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions"* (Luke 14:33), *"But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you"* and, *"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matt 5:39-42, 44).

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me'

'For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it'

'For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'

'For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS'" (Matthew 16:24-27 NASB)

Doubting Salvation

Many Christians who "doubt their salvation" are constantly told "it's not by your works, but Christ's work done for you." It's very likely, however, that they're not doubting Jesus' free gift, but what they are called to do with it. They doubt the church's idea of salvation because the Holy Spirit, rather than the church, is calling them to *"bear fruit in keeping with repentance,"* telling them that they are *"created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them,"* directing them to *"walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God,"* convicting them that *"the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked,"* and training them to live out Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to have their lives built and protected upon the Rock. They don't doubt that they've been given new life, but wonder at the emptiness and futility of that life without a saving faith to follow Jesus' self-denying but life-fulfilling teachings and commandments.

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him" (John 14:21 NASB)

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10 NASB)

"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James 2:26 NASB)

"Hate His Own Life…"

While most churches have become personal-life coaches to love and enjoy life, love oneself, forgive oneself, celebrate all that God has given, and to count one's blessings, Jesus is still saying, *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate…yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:26). He has given His free gift of salvation to those for whom it will cost everything, and the law of sin in the flesh will hate the law of God fulfilled by seeking after the holiness and righteousness that Jesus taught. It will hate forgiving others, showing mercy, denying self, seeking the last place, taking care of the least of these, and confessing Jesus to a world that doesn't need His forgiveness, someone's charity, another loser and non-starter, and those full of compassion and mercy. The flesh, in contrast to the spirit and soul, will constantly hunger and thirst from losing one's life to gain it on Jesus' narrow path.

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25 NASB)

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26 NASB)

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Matthew 16:27 NASB)

Passover

Many of those whom God "passed over" in His judgment on Egypt were, themselves, severely judged a short time later (Exodus 16-32). Similarly, God did not sacrifice His Son and Jesus did not suffer and die for people to make a religion *out of* Jesus' atonement and propitiation for sin, but so that they could love Him and the world around them (according to His teachings) *because of* His atonement and propitiation for sin. Jesus didn't die to supplement our lives, but so that we could lose our lives to supplement His. God replaced observing the works of His law with faith in His Son's, *"teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."* He replaced following His written word (His Law) by the flesh with following His Living Word (His Son) by the heart, soul, mind, and strength. The Lamb of God is the new, permanent "Passover," *"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)* so that:

"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; (1 John 2:3-4 NASB)

"but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

"the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:5-6 NASB)

"How, then, shall we live?"

What if the renunciation of a life of sin and becoming a Christian was wonderful? What if new Christians, however, would not be further prepared for endless spiritual battle, bearing a cross, and losing one's life to find it because they did not receive the details of Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments on how that is to be done? What if that lack of preparation would mean floundering in faith for years, falling or purposefully escaping onto sinful paths, building one's house on the sand, fulfilling 3 of the 4 outcomes of the Sower's seed, not having oil for one's lamp, or ending up on the wide path of destruction? What if their lives never seemed to find that *"peace that surpasses comprehension,"* His *"joy made complete," "rest for your souls,"* rejoicing in trials, and an understanding that *"through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."* What if "just have faith in God" didn't work but "faith to do what Jesus taught and commanded" did?

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to…" (Matthew 7:24a NASB)

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like…" (Matthew 7:26a NASB)

Imitation Proxy

Jesus' death on the cross is the final offering for sin that must be believed by confession of sin and repentance away from sin. But believing in the cross and believing in Jesus are not the same. Jesus did not come to establish a religion about faith in the propitiation of sin, but to use His propitiation for cleansing while demonstrating faith in all His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments about how we are to love and glorify His Father. To believe Jesus' ways so as to live them out is saving faith to be God's true children by imitation, rather than by proxy, of Himself. Jesus' commandments are self-denying but life fulfilling, self-humbling but God exalting, and cross-bearing but life-giving to fulfill His teaching to all Christian of,

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21 NASB)

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (Revelation 12:11 NASB)

Celebration

The church is celebrating Jesus' death and resurrection for their deliverance from sin into eternal life with God. Many are also celebrating their freedom from having to keep fighting sin and having to follow the law. They have been liberated from the obligation of the holiness and righteousness that God expects because Jesus fulfilled all that with His life and death on the cross. Any deviation of faith from that is labeled as "legalism" because of His "finished work" and because "He (by proxy) is our righteousness." The need to *"bear fruit in keeping with repentance"* which He warned and taught about is unnecessary because that was about the law and was before the cross that changed everything. They say Easter is a time for Christians to celebrate because of His free gift, because they are rich in God's grace, because they are heirs with Him, and because nothing more is needed. Believing the "written word of God" and believing the "Living Word who is God," however, are not the same.

"The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:"

'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.' (Revelation 3:14-16 NASB)

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17 NASB)

Imagine

Could you imagine having to forgive anyone who has cheated, insulted, stolen, or physically hurt you or your family? Could you imagine working hard at one's career but not pursuing advancement and even seeking a lower or more difficult position with less income? Could you imagine being told to avoid watching TV, movies, and social media so as not to love the world and to not be compelled into its lusts and deceit? Could you imagine working all day and then, rather than resting, taking care of the mental, emotional, and life burdens of non-family members? Could you imagine wanting to help those in need, helping them, and then being told it's not very good, not nearly enough, and unappreciated? Could you imagine doing these things the rest of your life to follow Jesus' commandments of *"pardon and you will be pardoned," "blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy,"* and *"bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ?"* Could you imagine that's the fullest life imaginable?

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39 NASB)

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS" (Matthew 11:29 NASB)

"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11 NASB)

Church Leaders

Evangelical Christians and Protest-ants often boast that they don't need a Pope and even judge and condemn those who think they need such spiritual leaders and "fathers." And besides, they have a plethora of their own theological leaders who provide their "biblical truth." They have the reformation giants who preached "truth" yet called for the blood of those who opposed their doctrines, and modern leaders who abound in the love of the world and unrepentant immorality while boasting that they are free (indeed) from God's law by His grace to celebrate and enjoy life before they hear, *"depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."* God does give leaders and teachers to Christians and churches, but it must all be filtered and subjected to first hearing and then acting on Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Living a Christian life based on Jesus' theology or church theology is to build one's eternity on the rock or the sand, respectively.

"But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven." (Matthew 23:8-9 NASB)

"Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:10-11 NASB)

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9 NASB)

Christian Tattoos

"Should Christians get tattoos?" is a beautiful example on the relationship between God's law and the purpose of His forgiveness, mercy, and grace. God's law says, *"You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD"* (Lev 19:28), and the prior verse says, *"You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard"* (Lev 19:27). Both tattoos and shaving are included when Jesus said, *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished"* (Mat 5:18). And Paul says, *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith"* (Gal 3:24). If faith is to believe Jesus and all He taught rather than just accept His propitiation of sins (which makes Him a doormat to heaven), then we would give constant thanks in humility for His mercy of past tattoos and current shaving practices rather than snubbing His law to befriend the world.

"You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called" (1 Corinthians 7:23-24 NASB)

"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4 NASB)

"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19 NASB)

Prodigal Mocker

I didn't become a prodigal son to set in My Father's house week after week for years so He could keep celebrating My return, I became one to be with Him in His life and work. I didn't keep celebrating my return while looking out the window to mock my older brother that he's working for his own merit to be self-righteous so he could look down on others. I didn't yell out the window, "hey loser, ever heard of 'faith, not works,' 'My power is perfected in weakness,' 'my Father loves me just the way I am,' 'you don't have to please Him because He's always pleased with us,' and 'don't try so hard - start enjoying your inheritance'"? I didn't explain to Him that it's because you've got "grace" and don't need to follow Jesus' commands to bear fruit to prove to be His disciple, to be yoked to Him, to be perfect, to be worthy of Him, to forgive to be forgiven, to be merciful to receive mercy, to love your enemies, and to lose your life in Him to gain it. I became a prodigal son to be about my Father's business.

"And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours" (Luke 15:31 NASB)

"(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:9-10 NASB)

"I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" (Revelation 3:1b NASB)

Walk on Waves

The night after feeding 5000, Jesus not only walked *on* water but *through* wind and rough waves. Although the boat was slowed by them, Jesus was going to pass them by. Jesus called Peter to walk *through* the waves, but Peter became afraid of them. Likewise, we are called to minister to the world around us, not only during the nice, still waters of life but while its wind and waves are coming at us. This can only happen by *wanting* to hear Jesus call us out of our spiritual safe place, by not looking at the world around us, and by imitating Him. We imitate Him by taking His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments, personally and literally; His forgiveness and grace are the lifeline to save us from sinking in times of doubt.

"And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'" (Matthew 14:33 NASB)

Fellowship

I didn't ask God for forgiveness to get into heaven, but to be with Him. I didn't rejoice about being forgiven because it gave me eternal life, but because it restored my relationship with God. I didn't keep celebrating to lay a foundation, over and over, of repentance and faith in Jesus' propitiation of sins, but sought to quench my thirst for life with the living water of His holiness and righteousness living through me. I didn't delight in being free from dead works so that "faith" would mean God having my back, but was thrilled that dead works could be living works by following Jesus' red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments, which He promised would bear eternal fruit to glorify Him. I wasn't (and still am not) ecstatic about the self-denying, life-losing nature of His narrow path, but I can testify that the sufferings along His path is to fellowship with Him and brings eternal peace, purpose, and power.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23 NASB)

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21 NASB)

"You are My friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:14 NASB)

Living Faith

Jesus' words, not the churches', have preeminence in what defines saving faith. Most churches define faith as trusting God with one's life, but Jesus' definition is to know that God has one's life on the condition they seek to lose their life in following His narrow path. Jesus' path is described by His teachings, commandments, warnings, and impending judgments. Although His descriptions are straightforward and lifechanging, the modern church focuses on anything else in the Bible to create precepts and traditions that spiritually lull people and elevate themselves through "better Bible knowledge." We do not come to know Jesus by "Bible knowledge," but by being yoked to Him in His work. The saying, "God's got our back" only happens when we, His body, are following in back of Jesus to continue His ministry with our neighbors and those around us.

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26 NASB)

Thief on the Cross

All saving faith has works that go with it. The thief on the cross was no exception, although many think he had no works. But his faith was expressed, under unimaginable suffering, by confessing his own sin and worthy punishment, acknowledging Jesus as Lord, and asking Him for mercy. Jesus said that we must work for the food which endures to eternal life and that is to believe Him when He says to repent and confess Him, forgive others to be forgiven, be merciful to receive God's mercy, seek the last place, become like a child, become a servant even a slave of other's burdens, turn the other cheek, care for the "least of these," love one's enemies, and lose one's life for Him to gain it from Him. Our role model for following Jesus is not some other brother's (or theologian's) testimony, but Jesus, Himself, who explained God and the narrow path to Him.

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Ephesians 5:1 NASB)

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS" (Matthew 11:29 NASB)

"By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:5-6 NASB)

Blowing Smoke

Christians don't need a "new Peter" from whom to receive spiritual guidance. They need to be discipled, each day, by Jesus' self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. In the same way, Protest-ants don't need their particular flavor of founding Reformer theology. They need to be discipled, each day, by Jesus' self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. And finally, all Christians don't need to know the Bible for "old Paul's" guidance on Roman-Road theology, freedom from God's law through grace, and "God's many promises" until they are discipled, each day, by "Forever-Jesus" self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments which will lead to His narrow path of life, the forgiveness and grace to follow it, and the many promises that come from following. Christianity is about *losing* one's life for the "Living Word," not about *knowing* the "written word," or worse, someone else's selected, interpreted, and Jesus-diverting "knowledge" of it.

"Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (1 Corinthians 8:1 NASB)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31 NASB)

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48 NASB)

The Epitome

The epitome of anti-Christ teaching is to say that the cross and resurrection somehow altered, contextualized, canceled, or negated Jesus' red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. It takes serious deception from *"*[Bible] *knowledge makes arrogant"* to ignore *"everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts…* or *who hears…and does not act…," "this is My beloved Son…listen to Him!," "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me," "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," "you are My friends if you do what I command," "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you," "we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ," "Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith," "faith comes by hearing…the word of Christ," "If anyone goes too far and does not abide in the teachings of Christ…," "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away"* and *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* But Jesus is still warning:

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy" (Revelation 22:11 NASB)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

The Embodiment

The embodiment of false Christian teaching is to say that Jesus' death and resurrection made His teachings obsolete. To say that His red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are now replaced by His forgiveness and grace is to reject Him. It makes Jesus a doormat for heaven. It removes His reason to forgive and His grace to live for God. It removes His ways to produce holiness and righteousness within us. It eliminates His ways to abide in His love and His Father's love, His ways to build one's spiritual house on the rock, His ways to bear fruit to glorify His Father and prove to be His disciples, His ways to the narrow path and narrow gate of life, and His ways for endurance by *"the word of My perseverance."* Although His true sheep will still hear His voice to follow Him, this false teaching is the apostasy for the goats that must precede *"the man of lawlessness"* and the resulting *"wine press of the fierce wrath of God."*

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:3 NASB)

"And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds" (Revelation 2:23 NASB)

True Religion

What the church calls "religion," Jesus calls "true religion." What the church calls "good works," Jesus calls "a Christian's life work." What the church calls "faith not works," Jesus calls "faith proven by works." What the church calls "unconditional love," Jesus calls "contractual, sacrificial love." What the church calls "freedom from sin," Jesus calls "slave of righteousness." What the church calls believing the "word of God," Jesus calls "believing Me, first, the Living Word of God." What the church calls following "God's law," Jesus calls "follow Me to fulfill God's law." What the church calls "faith is trusting God with your life," Jesus calls "faith is believing My teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments for life." What the church calls " forgive and love yourself to love others," Jesus calls "I've forgiven you to deny yourself to love others." What the church calls a "celebration of life," Jesus calls all to "lose their life for Me to gain it from Me."

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44 NASB)

"So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:49-50 NASB)

Preparation

Within a few of decades of the early 1900s, over 200 million people were killed and billions of lives devastated from two world wars, influenzae, and global economic collapse. Since then, untold loss and suffering have continued and increased at global, national, and domestic levels. Jesus said that the only way to prepare for these storms was to "hear and act" on His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments from His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). There would be no preparation by only "hearing" with no "acting." And in the modern church, even "hearing" the required details of His Sermon has been replaced by accepting church doctrines, Reformer theology, "faith not works," "God's grace," "trusting God with your life," church attendance, sermons on "the Bible" or "the apostles," and just "knowing that God loves you." Jesus warned us of what's coming next with, *"Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved"* (Mat 24:22a). Since there are currently 8 billion people on the earth, we should read Him again, literally and personally.

"Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'" (Matthew 25:11 NASB)

"But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'" (Matthew 25:12 NASB)

"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." (Matthew 25:13 NASB)

Manifest Jesus

What if "saving faith" in believing Jesus' story of the prodigal son and Him saying, *"you must be born again"* also required everything else He said? What if it included His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments that He expects in the thoughts and hearts and lives of those who *"were lost and have been found"*? What if that's what His forgiveness and grace are for? What if it wasn't about the letter of His Law given to Moses, but about living the Spirit of His Law given by His teachings? What if the other 99% of "saving faith" was to believe Him saying that we can only continue in His forgiveness by forgiving others, continue in His mercy by showing it to others, not be judged or condemned by not judging and not condemning others, be first in His kingdom by being last according to this world, and have Him confess to know us by confessing Him to others, by loving those who do not love us, by loving our enemies, and by losing our lives for Him to gain them from Him?

"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

Head of the Church

The modern church has faith in doctrines of salvation rather than faith in Jesus, its author and perfecter. The church believes in eternal forgiveness at the cross, yet Jesus says, *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions"* (Mat 6:14-15). That belief, therefore, is in doctrines rather than Jesus. The church knows there is eternal mercy at the cross, yet Jesus says, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy"* (Mat 5:7). That knowledge, therefore, is in doctrines rather than Jesus. The church believes that, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom 8:1), yet Jesus says, *"do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned"* (Luk 6:37b). That belief, therefore, is in doctrines made from Paul's teachings of salvation, and that the church now defines what it means to be *"in Christ Jesus."* Jesus, not the church, is the head of the church.

"He [Jesus] *is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything" (Colossians 1:18 NASB)*

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

Overflow

If a Christian's personal relationship with Jesus produces an intimacy with God that results in an overflow of love to love Him with everything and love their neighbors, that's great. If that intimacy still overflows in love during temptations, trials, suffering, hardship, loss, rejection, and total uncertainty of life, that's really great. If that intimacy never has any fear, doubt, disbelief, frustration, anger, malice, indignation, anxiety, self-preservation, or covetousness of life, that's super great. If that intimacy can substitute for acting on and obeying Jesus' red-letter, self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments, then that's something unknown in His word. And if that intimacy can replace being yoked to Him to work with Him, to fight the good fight, to suffer hardship as His good soldier, to learn how much we must suffer for Him, to bear a cross for His righteousness and holiness, and to lose one's life for Him to gain it from Him, then that's, well, some other religion.

"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (John 6:27a NASB)
"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised" (Hebrews 10:36 NASB)
"knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:3-4 NASB)
"to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Romans 2:7 NASB)
"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9 NASB)
"By your endurance you will gain your lives" (Luke 21:19 NASB)
"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mark 13:13 NASB)

Theology of Faith

In general, the modern church believes Paul's theology more than Jesus' theology. Paul's theology, however, totally depends on Jesus' theology and, by itself, is not faith in Jesus but faith in theology. Jesus' theology centers on how we are to live if we truly believe Him, while Paul's theology centers on *why* we can live because of Him and how faith in Him fulfills (not supplants) God's law. Even in following Paul over Jesus, the modern church still disregards Paul's theology (second half of letters) on the need (and ways) to prove our faith in order to be called children of God. This is because it's easier and more comfortable for people to believe that they "live by faith," are "saved by faith," and "hope by faith" than it is to actually live out their faith by Jesus' life altering ways and accountability.

"Therefore ... be diligent to be found by Him [Jesus] in peace, spotless and blameless, (2 Peter 3:14 NASB)

"as also in all his [Paul's] *letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16 NASB)*

Diet

Resolutions to diet or repentance to follow Jesus are analogous. Both recognize that the old ways lead to death. Both bring internal and external health. Both require the perseverance of a lifetime of daily focus and effort. Cheat days, cheat meals, or sin are only lies that entangle and deceive us away from the goals. These errors require forgiveness (not acceptance) and refocus through everyday planning and action (repentance). For instance, ceasing to hang out in the kitchen (or fridge) or watching food shows is analogous to the holiness that comes from not loving (embracing) the world and not watching the sensuality of its media. And replacing wrong foods with right foods is analogous to feeding our eyes and minds with Jesus' teachings and commandments and warnings and judgments.

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1 NASB)

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15 NASB)

Conditional Love

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands, His love for us is not "unconditional" but "conditional" and "sacrificial." For example, Jesus defines His Father's love for Him as, *"He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him"* (John 8:29), and *"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again"* (John 10:17). Likewise, Jesus defines our love for Him and the Father as, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (John 14:15), *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him"* (John 14:21), *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him"* (John 14:23), *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me"* (John 14:24), and

"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3)

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;" (1 John 2:4 NASB)

"but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him" (1 John 2:5 NASB)

"the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:6 NASB)

Authority

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands, marriage is the perfect background to understand and implement all that Jesus said is proof of a Christian life. What if husband and wife were also brother and sister? What if, spiritually, each was a minister or priest to the other and to the household? What if this authority, however, must imitate Jesus in: *"No one has taken it* [His life] *away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again"* (John 10:18a)? What if following Jesus in a marriage meant to lay down (or lose) our lives through His red-letter, self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments to forgive to be forgiven, desire and show mercy to receive it, pardon to be pardoned, seek the last place, be peacemakers, consider others as more important, become a servant even a slave, endure all things, not return evil for evil, and to even be persecuted for His righteousness? What if, for the family, this was His only path to His provision, protection, and His peace, rest, and joy?

"but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (Matthew 20:26-27 NASB)

"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ…" (Ephesians 5:21-33 NASB)

"When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28 NASB)

One Flesh

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands for holiness, married Christians should re-evaluate all that, *"the two shall become one flesh"* means. Aside from physical intimacy, "the flesh" also includes its draw to, *"anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth"* (Col 3:8b) and *"strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance,* [and] *disturbances"* (2 Cor 12:20b). Married Christians, therefore, must realize that they are an amalgamation of each other's "flesh." They must live with each other's passions, hopes, disappointments, frustrations, irritations, and pains. Christianity, however, is about pursuing the Spirit even though we live in "the flesh." From that background, the "spirit" and "soul" of each person must seek to live for God and die to self according to Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. In this blink-of-an-eye temporal life, however, only this path will bring Jesus' provision and protection, glorify God, and store up eternal treasures with Him.

"FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH" (Matthew 19:5 NASB)

"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matthew 19:6 NASB)

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:20-21 NASB)

Wilting

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands, Christians must know, more than ever, that, *"The world is passing away, and also its lusts."* And they must learn to endure, more than ever, *"but the one who does the will of God lives forever"* (1 John 2:17). There is a gospel (good news) of good works: those works done by the Holy Spirit through you, after repenting for Jesus' forgiveness of sins, and according to His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Many churches teach "just believe in Jesus," without the need for forgiveness of sins, repentance from sin, or the need to fulfill His commissioned works. But "tares" and "goats" are those who, *"loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed"* (John 3:19b-20). The true wheat and sheep, however, belong to,

"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

ReMarriage

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands, many Christians don't care that God disapproves of divorce and that He considers remarriage as adultery. Most justify it as necessary for their lives, and think calling remarriage a sin would mean invalidating the remarriage. If sin negated the remarriage, however, then all sin would negate one's whole life. The objective is not to negate one's life but to renew and start life over by humbly agreeing with God, confessing sin, seeking forgiveness, and then following Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments within the remarriage. Jesus said, by His sacrifice on the cross, that all sin can be forgiven, but it is not to be ignored or excused. He warned, however, that ignoring or excusing sin or His call to believe Him puts one back under the law rather than within the purpose for His forgiveness, grace and even salvation.

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS' (Matthew 7:23 NASB)

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life'" (John 4:13-14 NASB)

"Jesus said to them [His disciples], 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work'" (John 4:34 NASB)

Father's Day

In this June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus, the church must reevaluate the role of "father" and "husband" in a marriage. The question of authority and leadership in a household has long been debated. According to the NT, Husbands are to, *"love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"* (Eph 5:25), and we know that the "how" of "Christ's love" is found in His teachings and commandments to forgive everything, show mercy in everything, bear one another's burdens, seek the last place, become last to be first, become a servant even a slave of others, care for "the Lazaruses" and the "least of these," give to anyone who asks, turn the other cheek and give your shirt as well, be peacemakers, love those who do not love you, and seek to lose your life for Jesus to gain it from Him. It seems unlikely, however, that God would be opposed to wives trying to better their husbands in these "authoritative" things.

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win" (1 Corinth 9:24 NASB)

"Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Corinth 9:25 NASB)

"let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1b NASB)

Barbarism

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus, how will a Christian live in a society of barbarism? By learning, now, how to follow Jesus' teachings and commandments. For instance, by learning, now, how to forgive others, no matter what, how to desire and show mercy, how to not call or think of any person as an idiot, how to greet those who do not greet you, how to love those who do not love you, how to seek the last place, how to offer the other cheek when verbally or physically oppressed, how to be a peacemaker, how to confess Him to those who hate Him, and how to seek out and care for the poor in spirit, the "Lazarus's" (at the rich man's gate), and the "Least of These." A Christian prepper in anarchy has already become a servant even a slave and learned to love their enemies, to pick up a cross, daily, in self-denial, and to lose one's life for Him in order to gain it from Him.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them…Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them…" (Matthew 7:24a, 26a NASB)

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mark 13:13 NASB)

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (Revelation 12:11 NASB)

Behavioral Modification

In this June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus, Christians often hear how Christianity is not about behavioral modification but about just accepting God's love. Real Christianity, however, is about a lifetime of complete behavioral modification, starting with *"taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor 10:5) and *" we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live"* (Rom 8:12-13). Christianity is all about replacing life according to the flesh with life according to the Holy Spirit, and it is the reason for repentance and forgiveness by Jesus' blood sacrifice, and the purpose of living by His red-letter, self-denying teachings and commandments to glorify God. And it is the purpose, hope, and perseverance of every frayed nerve and shed tear in the sufferings from this flesh and this world.

"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14 NASB)

"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments"

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4 NASB)

Hearing Aid

In the June humility month of repentance and submission to Jesus' commands, many Christians can't hear Jesus because the purpose of His forgiveness and grace is to just "get saved" and "be blessed" rather than to bear a cross, prove to be His disciples, and glorify Him. Jesus teaches and commands how Christians are to be holy and righteous, and warns that not pursuing His ways will have consequences and judgments. He says that living out His teachings is proof of eternal life after being "born again." In contrast, "Roman Road" theology and "God's blessings and promises" of the modern church are from being disciples of Paul rather than Jesus and from cherry-picked NT verses. Hearing Jesus is muffled by stories from the Old Testament or Acts, by skimming for favorite "life or heart" verses, and by skipping, negating, or claiming ignorance to Jesus' red-letter, self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments on what real Christianity is.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17 NASB)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35 NASB)

Bunker Buster

Outside of the pseudo-Christian bunker of God's grace, forgiveness, mercy, and nothing more needed, God has saved His true children so that they will no longer be slaves of sin but slaves of righteousness. While the church works very hard to negate the need for any of Jesus' commandments and obedience and good works to live through a Christian, Jesus is still warning with, *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Mat 7:19), and *"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked"* (Rev 3:17). Jesus' red-letter, self-denying, life-losing teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are how to repent to fulfill, *"I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see"* (Rev 3:18).

"So then, you will know them by their fruits."

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter" (Mat 7:20-21 NASB)

Tsunamis

Physical protection and security or Spiritual protection and security? Jesus says, "Turn the other cheek when struck, go the extra mile when forced to go the first, give your coat as well, love those who do not love you, love your enemies, do not return evil for evil, take up your cross, and lose your life for Me to gain it from Me." How is following Jesus' way more protective and secure than physical self-defense and public security? It would seem to be the opposite. A church whose heart is with Jesus' ways, however, will be spiritually protected even when it's being specifically tested, and the "mental health issues" of members and their families will be significantly soften, managed, or altogether healed. Enduring till the end and "the word of My perseverance" are God's "path of peace" and "narrow path of life" rather than the path of the world and the wide path of destruction. According to Jesus, practicing His Sermon on the Mount is the only way of surviving, rather than fighting against, the tsunamis of life.

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword'" (Matthew 26:52 NASB)

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (Revelation 12:11 NASB)

Believers

Salvation is to make unbelievers into believers of Jesus who repent of sin and seek to do the good works that Jesus taught and commanded with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Repentance and good works are not His written law but His law of life; they are not a salvation of works but works resulting from salvation; they are not "faith not works" but "faith by works;" they are not earning His forgiveness and mercy but proving it by having forgiveness and mercy for others; they are not believing salvation-doctrines *about* God's law, forgiveness, mercy, and grace but believing the Savior, Himself, to live out His law of love, forgiveness, mercy, and grace; they are not about resting in the preservation of the saints but about enduring to the end by the *"word of My perseverance,"* and they are not about becoming rich in grace because of His finished work but about finishing His work by losing one's life with His grace.

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24 NASB)

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

Repent

Some Christians say "repent, surrender, and follow Jesus." But repent from what, surrender what, and follow how, specifically? Repentance, at least, is turning away from the various sins which are explained by Jesus and listed throughout the NT. For instance, *"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these…"* (Gal 5:19-21a). But repentance for holiness goes much deeper than individual sins, and represents a lifetime of fighting and turning away from the "law of sin" in our flesh and its love for self and for the world, *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world"* (1 John 2:16). Jesus' blood does not free us with a license for unholiness, but from the law of sin to pursue a life of holiness that He leads us in.

"Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9b-10 NASB)

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord…,' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS'" (Matthew 7:22a-23 NASB)

Surrender

Some Christians say "repent, surrender, and follow Jesus." But repent from what, surrender what, and follow how, specifically? Surrender, at least, is surrendering one's life to God, and it is to believe that God keeps us and will deliver us through all life's twists, turns, difficulties, mistakes, and sufferings. But this type of surrender, however, is about God keeping *our* lives and God having *our* backs rather than surrendering to an exchanged life that seeks to live by all Jesus' red-letter, self-denying, and life-losing teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. A life surrendering to His ways fulfills, *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Gal 2:20a), *"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me"* (Mat 10:38), and *"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it"* (Mat 10:39). It's only this type of surrendered life that fulfills being "In Christ Jesus."

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1 NASB)

"Just as it is written, 'FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED'" (Romans 8:36 NASB)

Follow

Some Christians say "repent, surrender, and follow Jesus." But repent from what, surrender what, and follow how, specifically? Following, at least, necessitates first repenting of sin and surrendering our lives to replace them with Jesus' life. Following then seeks to live out His teachings and commandments while never negating His warnings and judgments. In this way we can forgive others to keep His forgiveness, show mercy to receive it, seek to be last to be first, beware of all forms of greed, confess Him for Him to confess us, minister to the "least of these" to minister to Him, turn the other cheek when oppressed, become a servant even slave to others, love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and endure to the end. The Great Commission is not about making converts who believe doctrines about salvation; it's about making disciples who believe Jesus to imitate and follow Him to glorify His Father and our Father.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations…" "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19a-20a NASB)

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8 NASB)

Asleep

Fourteen times, Jesus and Paul refer to death as "having fallen asleep," and Jesus woke three people from that "sleep" to demonstrate His authority over it. Being "asleep," spiritually, is also used by Jesus and Paul throughout the NT, and Paul warned Christians of its physical consequences with, *"For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep"* (1Cor 11:30). Nowhere in the NT are Christians called to just "get saved," "get raptured," and "go to heaven." They are called to be true children of God by following Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments to bear fruit, glorify God, prove to be His disciples, live by His Sermon on the Mount and *"the word of My Perseverance,"* and to keep their lamps lit so that they can see their way before the door is shut. As the end days approach, most "biblical" teaching is against these things, and it's no wonder that Jesus is still warning, *"What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'"* (Mar 13:37).

"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come." (Mark 13:33 NASB)

"It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert." (Mark 13:34 NASB)

"Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning - in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep." (Mark 13:36 NASB)

Eye-Site

A Christian's eyes are perpetually drawn to the upsetting multidirectional waves of this world rather than to Jesus and His kingdom. We are, however, also called to perpetually choose, with spiritual eyes and spiritual ears, Jesus and His kingdom. We have not been set free, provided forgiveness and grace, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit to be led by physical eyes and ears, but by the spiritual. Eyes on the world and the flesh are always punctuated with pride, guilt, shame or fear, but it is those very things that should act as warning signals for us to refocus on Jesus' calling to live His holy and righteous life. The craziness of the world or our annoyed, indignant, or needy selves must jar us to spiritually see our need to be yoked with Jesus' and to hear Him tell us how to find rest for our souls.

"always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:10 NASB)

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33 NASB)

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS." (Matthew 11:29 NASB)

Excuses 2

Excuses to live in sin and not pursue Jesus' life are nurtured by many church precepts. 1) We live by faith not by works. Unfortunately, faith in Jesus means faith to live (work) according to His teachings. 2) God's forgiveness and grace cover all my sins and inadequacy. Unfortunately, God's forgiveness and grace is given for repentant sin and a life pursuing repentance. 3) God's power is perfected in my weakness (i.e. too weak to stop sinning and follow Him). Unfortunately, His power in weakness is the weakness that comes from laying down our lives for Him, not seeking to preserve them. And 4) God freed me to live my fullest potential. Unfortunately, Jesus freed us to become the "fullest Him" not our "fullest selves," to lose ourselves to gain Him, and to become a slave of His righteous ways, not continue as a slave of sin.

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46 NASB)

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (Romans 6:1 NASB)

Heaven's Constitution (Covenant)

In comparison to the constitution's "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," the born-again Christian is tasked with "life, liberty for the pursuit of holiness (e.g. forsaking immorality)." They are saved to pursue Jesus' teachings and commandments on holiness (not loving the world, etc.) and righteousness (forgiving others, etc.) to demonstrate their salvation, glorify God, and share in His glory. In contrast, the modern church says any kind of belief in Jesus brings life and liberty for the pursuit of happiness rather than holiness. They teach that Jesus' holiness and righteousness expressed through a believer are just metaphorical ("When God sees me…") or not even required (His finished work). To ignore Jesus' teachings against this, they offer the acceptance of church doctrines, church attendance, being a nice person, or being in a correct political alignment.

"Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;" (1 John 3:7 NASB)

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10 NASB)

"and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:29 NASB)

Christian Narcissism

The modern church has become a platitude factory; it's only about how much God loves us rather than how we are to love God. It uses His love to appeal to people's narcissism: "He loves us sooo much," "God meets you where you're at," "He knows your needs," "You're someone worth dying for," "Your beautiful," and "We're all kings and queens in His eyes." Everyone's a saved lost sheep (regardless of their desire to stay lost) rather than a pig-slop-prodigal who needs serious mercy. Sin is no longer about our sin against God and how it effects our lives or others, but how we are victims of a fallen world and that's what Jesus came to save us from. We only hear about our victimhood, our brokenness, our need for healing, our tears, and our pain. Unfortunately, true life is found in fulfilling our part of God's covenant rather than by making His part into Grandmother-like coddling.

"Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." (John 5:14b NASB)

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." (John 15:10 NASB)

Theophobia

True unbelievers will generally have what's called theophobia: dread of the wrath of God. In contrast, Christians should have a fear of God, but not the dread of His wrath, unless one is still under the law by not believing Jesus to pursue His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. The dread of God's wrath by the world is described throughout the book of Revelation and Jesus explained it with, *"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed"* (John 3:19-20). For this reason, the world tries to hide its theophobia through its passions of humanism, "scientific facts," and the worship of its own flesh and indulgences.

"The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, ...; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts" (Revelation 9:21 NASB)

"I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds."

"And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds" (Revelation 2:21-23 NASB)

Kiss Cam

The kiss cam is a perfect example for everyone, Christian or not, of how one's life of sin or life pursuing the holiness and righteousness of Jesus will be on display before God and heaven. It will show the extent of Jesus having lived, or not lived, through a believer by the faith they had, or did not have, respectively, to live by Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements. Daily repentance by the Christian and forgiveness for any shortcomings by Jesus' blood will also be on display. It will not be a video of Jesus' life replacing the lives of entitled sinners saved to play victims in a church hospital. Rather, the fulfillment of God's law will have been fulfilled by Jesus' narrow path lived through a believer, with Jesus' blood cleansing from all sin. The spiritual fruit born of His Holy Spirit living out Jesus' red-letter, self-denying, and life-losing ways through a believer will be on display to glorify God and as proof of a true "personal relationship" with Jesus.

"wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." (1 Cor 4:5 NASB)

"The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed." (1 Timothy 5:24-25 NASB)

Faith on the Earth

The reasons for living. The hope of suffering. The purpose for life. The fulfillment of life. The ability to persevere day after day, for years on end, until death. These are the things taken away by modern church precepts that turn a living salvation of real faith to live Jesus' narrow path into an empty, powerless acceptance and belief of doctrines and theologies. Jesus' works of faith have been negated by "faith not works." *"Find rest for your souls"* by being yoked to Him has been replaced by "His finished work." *"You are My friends if you do what I command"* is erased by "a personal relationship" in His "unconditional- come- as-you-are love." Any need for *"The word of My Perseverance"* is supplanted by the "preservation of the saints." His hope of suffering to lose your life for Him to find it in Him is replaced with "He saved us to be free to live our lives." And "follow Me" has been replaced by "He has our backs – just trust Him."

"However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8b NASB)

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:3 NASB)

A Blessed Curse

For those who believe and follow Him, Jesus has transformed the suffering of this life into suffering for His glory and His glory that is then shared with the sufferer. His curses of work, toil, and finally death are all now part of life in His Spirit rather than life in the flesh. Even in non-belief, suffering is used to show everyone their need for His real way and His real truth and His real life. But in belief, they flourish to have more of God through Jesus' narrow path detailed by His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. They lead to picking up one's cross and losing one's life for Him to gain it from Him. They transform each Christian from living for oneself through the flesh to living for God by His Spirit. Through suffering, the thoughts, intents, longings, and deeds of the flesh are left abandon and forsaken to be replaced only by Jesus as the Living Word to separate soul and spirit, and as the Living Water to quench all its thirst.

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinth 4:16 NASB)

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37a-38 NASB)

"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 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" (2 Corinth 4:17-18 NASB)

Forgiving

Forgiving others for their sins is a commandment that Jesus ties to eternal life. He details it in and after "the Lord's Prayer" and by a graphic parable. The Creator of all things says what will happen if we forgive others and what will happen if we do not. If saving faith, however, is to believe Paul's teachings about the law and grace but use them to replace Jesus' expectations of being saved, then do that. If saving faith is to accept church doctrines about the Bible and salvation rather than believe Jesus, then do that. If saving faith is to believe that God's love is unconditional rather than sacrificial and that He expects sacrificial love from us in return, then do that. Or if saving faith is to believe church precepts that everything Jesus said before the cross no longer means anything, then do that. But if saving faith is to believe Jesus for eternal life, then live by what He said.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:14-15 NASB)

Not Perfect

"Not perfect, just forgiven" is one of the biggest false teachings of the modern church. Jesus calls all true Christians to pursue perfection and He instructs them how to do it with such things as "give the poor widow's mite, forgive to be forgiven, seek the last place, turn the other cheek, care for 'the least of these,' confess Him for Him to confess us, love your enemies, be hated without a cause, and lose one's life to gain it." Clearly, just being "not perfect, just forgiven" is way easier, but its contribution to becoming a fruit-bearing Christian that will bring glory to God for eternity is unclear. In Jesus' perfection, there's no need to worry about bragging, limelight, self-righteousness, or self-seeking because most people will either despise or pity you and you'll grow very tired and even hateful of life in this earthen vessel.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24 NASB)

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal." (John 12:25 NASB)

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him." (John 12:26 NASB)

Breakdown

Nations are breaking down, society is breaking down, and individuals are breaking down. This is what happens to a society when the protection and stability of the Holy Spirit through the church is lost. They are lost by the church's precepts to just know that "God loves you" and to just "get saved and go to heaven" rather than to follow, lose all, and die for Jesus along His narrow path of life. Individuals who can still hear Him, however, must continue to prepare by forgiving others, humbling themselves as a child, being peacemakers, confronting force and insult by turning the other cheek and going another mile, not coveting anything in this world, desiring and showing mercy to others, and by loving those who don't love you, the "least of these," and one's enemies. The flood is coming, and those on the rock from seeking to live His red-letter, self-denying, life-losing teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments will be ready to endure to the end.

"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10 NASB)

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21 NASB)

Poor in Spirit

Jesus ties being "poor in spirit" with eternal life in, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 5:3). This idea is throughout the NT in, *"For consider your calling…," "did not God choose the poor of this world…,"* "Lazarus at the rich man's gate," and *"the least of these, My brethren,"* etc. Therefore, the Creator of all things expects us to become and minister to the "poor in spirit." If, however, "saving faith" is only to believe Paul's teachings about the law and grace rather than Jesus' teachings, then do that. If saving faith is to only accept church doctrines about salvation rather than pursue Jesus' expectations in salvation, then do that. If saving faith is to believe that God's love is unconditional rather than sacrificial with our sacrificial love in return, then do that. Or if saving faith makes everything Jesus said before the cross no longer valid, then do that. But if saving faith is to believe Jesus for eternal life, then live by what He said.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me" (Matthew 25:45 NASB)

"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46 NASB)

Unbelieving Perspectives

What does an unbelieving world hear from the church? Even though they don't *believe* in a God or the true God, and certainly not in Jesus as the only way to heaven, they *hear* God is merciful (even if they deny needing it), they *hear* He's not about judgement, they *hear* He loves people just the way they are, they *hear* He forgives sin (if that's even real), and they *see* that He gives His followers the freedom to live as greedily, immorally, and self-serving as they want as long as they confess His grace and agree with some church traditions and political alignment. The unbelieving world are witnesses to a church that's embracing rather than repenting from covetousness, entertainment, dissipation, and sensuality, and all the while complaining that unbelievers hinder their security and traditions. And finally, they see a false church that has made up a god to suit themselves, and a false church that they can mock and dismantle.

"For 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,' just as it is written." (Romans 2:24 NASB)

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men." (Matthew 5:13 NASB)

"I know your deeds…So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth." (Revelation 3:15a,16 NASB)

Suffering 2

"No one really knows why God allows suffering and if anyone says that they do, don't listen to them." So exhorted a modern church leader who had undergone extensive suffering in years past. Why could they not see the hope and purpose of suffering that saturates the Gospels and remaining New Testament? Why could they not see God's true children being called to imitate, at their smallest level, their long-suffering heavenly Father? Why could they not see the suffering as an imitation of Jesus in His ministry, or its continuation by His apostles and His followers? How could they not see that His curse of suffering and death on people and the world since the beginning was being transformed into pure purpose and eternal glory? How could they not want to follow Jesus in, *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered"* (Hebrews 5:8)? We shouldn't listen to others about suffering, including this post; but definitely listen to, be yoked to, and follow Jesus in it.

"for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16 NASB)

"strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts 14:22 NASB)

"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Corinth 4:17 NASB)

First-Last

Jesus repeatedly teaches that seeking the last rather than the first place in life and that humbling rather than exalting oneself before people affects one's eternity. He says, "*If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all"* (Mark 9:35b), and *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Luke 14:11). The Creator of all things is telling and warning us how to prepare for eternity. If saving faith, however, is to just accept church doctrines about how to "get saved" rather than listen to Jesus, then do that. If "saving faith," is to "get saved" by Paul's teachings about the law and grace rather than believe Jesus, then do that. If saving faith is to just accept God's unconditional love rather follow Jesus' definition of sacrificial love, then do that. Or if saving faith means believing the apostasy that a "new era of grace" invalidates all Jesus' teachings before the cross, then do that. But if saving faith is to believe Jesus for eternal life, then live by what He said.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"But many who are first will be last; and the last, first" (Matthew 19:30 NASB)

Pleasing

Is it, "I work to please God" or "because God loves me, I work? Or is it, "I work to identify myself with God," or "because I am His, I work." How did Jesus do it? *"And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him"* (John 8:29) and Jesus' spiritual-life food is, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34). Even though Jesus is God's Son, He still sought to please His Father and worked for His Father as for food, itself. Identity and lifework are inseparable: *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered"* (Heb 5:8). In general, Paul testified of who we are "in Christ Jesus," and Jesus testified of what being in Him will look like. Faith that is "just knowing God loves me and that I am His" is faith in doctrines about salvation rather than faith in the Savior, Himself.

"Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9 NASB)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB)

Early Faith

Even before the first church gathering or first church building, saving faith was believing Jesus about how to have eternal life. Even before the New Testament was written or the first Bible was published, saving faith was believing Jesus about how to have eternal life. And even before Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead, saving faith was believing Jesus about how to have eternal life. In the modern church, however, saving faith by believing Jesus about how to have eternal life has been replaced by belonging to the right church or denomination, accepting a church's statement of faith, believing "the Bible," believing in New Testament doctrines *about* salvation, or even believing only in the cross and resurrection without Jesus' teachings. The cross is the fulfillment of the law to forgive sins for those who believe Jesus and His teachings. Believing in the cross alone or believing the One crucified for how to have eternal life are not the same.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23 NASB)

"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:24 NASB)

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9)

The Widow's Mite

Jesus said that the poor widow who put only "a cent" into the temple offering gave more than all those who were rich because it was *"all she owned, all she had to live on."* The widow illustrated His constant warnings about the need to live a life of "saving faith," rather than to just "get saved," for eternity. For instance, He said, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth…, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matt 6:19a, 21) and *"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"* (Luke 18:24) and *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions"* (Luke 12:15). If "saving faith," however, is not believing Jesus about the need to live for eternity but just believing, instead, that doctrines about "grace" replace "works" of faith, or believing in God's unconditional love, accepting a free-gift token into heaven, or even worse, believing precepts that Jesus' teachings are invalidated by God's mercy and grace of the cross, well then,– good luck.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:21 NASB)

Hospital for Sinners

A church is not a hospital for sinners, but it should be a center to teach DIY spiritual "physical therapy" and spiritual "occupational therapy." Because a life of sin disables, weakens, hampers, and distorts our whole heart, soul, mind, and body, Jesus first forgives our sin so that we can then practice His therapy of holiness and righteousness to gain healing, purpose, and His glory. Spiritual physical therapy promotes healing by practicing *holiness* for God by not loving the world, controlling the flesh, and avoiding and fleeing all immorality. Occupational spiritual therapy gives us spiritual purpose by practicing His *righteousness* to our neighbors (in or out of church) by providing materials and help, bearing other's burdens, or teaching all that He has commanded to us to have a life of faith. "Getting saved" is only the first step of "being saved" and "working out our salvation" to become healthy and fruitful in His true life.

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked," (Revelation 3:17 NASB)

"I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see." (Revelation 3:18 NASB)

Pentateuch

Just as the Old Testament has a Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) for God beginning to build His kingdom on earth by those willing to live for Him according to His law, the New Testament has a Pentateuch (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Revelation) for the completion of His kingdom on earth by those willing to believe His Son on how He said to live. Just as Genesis is *"in the beginning,"* Revelation is *"the end of all things."* Just as Jesus was the Creator in, "*All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being"* (John 1:3), He will also define the end in, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"* (Rev 22:13). From this temporal earth, God determines who will have eternal life with Him, not by those who reduced His law to "we are children of Abraham" or by those who reduced Jesus to "by faith, not by works," but by for all who lived by faith – either according to the Pentateuch of God's law until the Messiah or the Pentateuch of the Messiah, Himself.

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy." (Revelation 22:11 NASB)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

Fast in Secret

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He teaches that fasting by a Christian is part of eternal life and eternal reward (Matt 6:16-18). His red-letter, self-denying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are about living holy and righteous lives, about living by His Holy Spirit rather than the flesh, and about Him living through us to love God with everything we have and to love our neighbors as ourselves. "Faith not works" (in contrast to "faith by works") people, however, say it leads to boasting, it's self-righteousness, it's a "works-based salvation," it's living under the law not grace, and it's unnecessary because Jesus is our righteousness and justification. Jesus, rather, is speaking to those who *want* to love God and their neighbor, who *want* to fellowship with Him and His Father, who *want* to be pleasing to Him, and who *know* His forgiveness of sin is to keep following Him. They know *"that whoever believes in Him"* means to believe *Jesus'* red-letter definition of what a "personal relationship" with Him and His Father is.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:18 NASB)

Justice 2

"now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8). Christians know about justice and injustice done to them, but do they know what real faith in Jesus is? Apart from a sinner's prayer, reading the Bible, worship, and trusting God to fix problems, do they have faith to believe Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments? Do they know, for instance, these things from His Sermon on the Mount, and that living them out is the difference between a spiritual life built on the rock or the sand? Do they know that forgiving others, desiring mercy over judgment, taking care of "the least of these," bearing other's burdens, giving and confessing Jesus in the face of opposition, loving one's enemies, and losing one's life for Jesus to gain it from Him are implicit in salvation?

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (Luke 9:24 NASB)

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mark 13:13 NASB)

"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal" (John 6:27 NASB)

Laodicea

The modern church is in a state of hyper-hyper grace, with salvation being faith in that alone. The Apostle Paul's letters clearly facilitate this evolution when taken out of context with Jesus', the other apostles', and Paul's complete teachings. In addition, hyper grace originated from Reformers who were more interested in attacking the Catholic church than reforming to a real faith in Jesus to believe His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements. While Paul taught that the "works" of the law were now transferred to the "works" of faith in believing and following Jesus, the reformers taught that the "works" of the catholic church corrupted "faith and grace, alone" rather than "faith in Jesus and grace to follow Him." In Paul's day, Jesus' words had not been widely distributed ("when the perfect comes…") and in the reformer's day, Martin Luther called the Letter of James, "straw," and most reformers routinely called for brutal, violent measures to opponents. Modern Christianity has since "iced the cake" of hyper grace with many more church doctrines, precepts, and traditions.

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?" (Matthew 7:16 NASB)

"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19 NASB)

Labor Day

On this temporal Labor Day, here's a smidgeon of spiritual labor verses to keep building God's kingdom, pleasing the Lord, bearing fruit, taking up His yoke, loving the "least of these," striving to enter by the narrow gate, and losing one's life to gain it. *"Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor"* (1 Cor 3:8), *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"* (Eph 2:10), *"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life"* (John 6:27a), *"but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need"* (Eph 4:28b), *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34), and *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples"* (John 15:8).

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24 NASB)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

Truth

Christians are always flaunting the "truth" of the Bible, but rarely will they attribute it to Jesus who is the incarnate "truth." "Truth" usually represents their own Bible knowledge and interpretations rather than Jesus as "truth." And so-called "Bible-knowledge" truth has been used by Satan and by OT Pharisees, medieval crusaders, leaders of 200 years of "Holy War," tribunals of heretics, witch-burning Christians, Christian cult leaders, gun-toting or woke Christians, and by every one of the current 50,000 Christian denominations. "Biblical truth" without Jesus' truth produces all kinds of "Christianity" containing minimal or zero Jesus and lots of "other scripture" to validate the traditions, precepts, whims, and comforts of people. Therefore, every so-called "Christian truth" must line up with Jesus' red-letter, self-denying, Father-glorifying teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. "Knowing the truth" (the written word) and living out Jesus' truth (the Living Word) are not the same.

"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

"if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21 NASB)

"Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (1 Corinth 8:1b NASB)

Momma god

John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* God's interpretation of *"believes in Him"* would most likely include, *"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"* (Matt17:5b) and, *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me"* (John 14:24) and, *"You are My friends if you do what I command you"* (John 15:14). In contrast, modern church interpretation of *"believes in Him"* is more like, "For a smitten, love-sick heavenly father loved the world so unconditionally and without expectation or judgment that He said whoever believes 'the Bible' and the churches' interpretations it, or ignores their sins by 'faith and grace alone,' or knows that Jesus' death and resurrection are heaven's doormat for sin, or knows that Jesus' red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are now replaced by God's infinite grace, mercy, and forgiveness has eternal life - with all its crowns, glory, and huggy Jesus."

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting;" (2 John 1:10 NASB)

"for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." (2 John 1:11 NASB)

Confess Jesus

Jesus gives the conditions of eternal life in our confession of Him with a double emphasis, *"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven"* (Matt 10:32-33). Confessing Him means to confess that He is the Christ: that He is the propitiation for sins and that His teachings and commandments are the way to live from that propitiation. He outlines the cost and rewards of this confession immediately after (Matt 10:34-42). To confess Him as Savior also means to follow Him as Lord with the cost of that life, while confessing Him as Savior but denying His teachings is to deny Him as Christ, *"This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God"* (2 John 1:7b-9a).

"the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:38 NASB)

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39 NASB)

No "Great Again"

Jesus did not suffer on the earth and die for the world to make Isreal godly again, rebuild a wholesome Isreal, and get the bad Roman soldiers to go home. He did so to make His kingdom available to those who would believe Him to repent from this world and live for His kingdom by His teachings. Jesus taught that Satan is the ruler of this world and that the nations are his glory. Jesus taught that all the world is in darkness and that people love the world, hate His light, and walk under "the prince of the power of the air." In the same way, a Christianity that has become about making a nation great again in traditions and morality is a religion giving lip service to God to live their own comfortable lives rather than to lay them down according to Jesus' commands. And they are not prepared for the coming flood by acting on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In the liquidation of Isreal, Christians who had acted were on Jesus' definition of the rock and those who had not acted were on the sand.

"And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5 NASB)

"And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish'" (Luke 4:6 NASB)

"and he threw him [Satan] *into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer" (Revelation 20:3a NASB)*

Floods

Holiness and morality are not the same; righteousness and nationalism are not the same; and morality and nationalism are not Christianity. When the church pursues holiness, as defined by Jesus' warnings and pending judgments, a nation follows with increased morality. When the church does not pursue holiness, a nation looks like – this. Similarly, when the church pursues righteous living, as defined by Jesus' teachings and commandments, a nation will follow with real community and care between neighbors. When the church fails to produce both the holiness and righteousness defined by Jesus' red-letter, self-denying instructions, it prepares itself and the nation for "spewing" with the "floods of life." These floods will wash away those who did not act on Jesus' words from those who did. Individuals, however, who can still hear Jesus' voice through the clutter of "faith in church doctrines alone," rather than "faith in Jesus alone," must double down on seeking His ways for the lamp oil to seek Him until the end.

"See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven" (Hebrews 12:25 NASB)

"This expression, 'Yet once more,' denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27 NASB)

Peacemakers

If one has eternal life by believing Jesus, then only those who are "peacemakers" will be God's true children since He said, *"blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."* "Peace-makers" are differentiated from those who are just "peace-likers" by those who take the risk and loss of making peace among family, friends, their neighbors, those who don't love them, and their enemies. They hear and follow Jesus in forgiving all sins against them, desiring and showing mercy to all, humbling themselves to others, enduring oppression by turning the other cheek and going another mile, confessing Jesus in the midst of hate, giving to those who can't pay back, not judging and not condemning those who judge them, and losing their lives for Jesus to gain them from Him. God saves those through His Son's blood to become His true children, not to believe doctrines about salvation, but to believe the Savior, Himself. Believe Jesus again, literally and personally.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

Wide Path

Jesus' narrow path of life is not "getting saved" and then becoming a conservative or liberal Christian. His narrow path of life is to believe Him about what a "saved" life or a life of salvation is: through faith to follow His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments about how to love God with everything and how to love our neighbors. His forgiveness of sins is for following Him to forgive others, show mercy, bear other's burdens, flee immorality, face oppression with humility and love, not covet our life in this world but covet it for His kingdom, testify of His holiness and ways, and love "the least of these," those who don't love us, and our enemies without expecting anything in return. God's enemy loves an empty salvation that finds its fulfilment and meaning in the pursuit of this world's values. God's enemy promotes all kinds of precepts, traditions, and theologies to avoid following Jesus other than as a doormat for sin and as a sugar daddy for this life.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it" (Matthew 7:13 NASB)

"For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14 NASB)

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15 NASB)

What if?

What if all of Jesus' red-letter, self-denying, life-losing teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments were true? What if they were all directed at those who "professed" to believe in Him? What if they were His expectations for real faith in Him? What if He does forgive sins and cause someone to be "born again," but with the purpose to have real faith in Him by believing all His red-letter teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments? What if this is not a "works-based salvation" of but a "life-based salvation" – His life through our lives? What if His continued forgiveness and grace, His indwelling Holy Spirit, His discipline and sanctification, all the supplemental writings of His apostles, and all His promises of eternal life and eternal reward is for His life to be lived through us? What if His life not lived through us is not and never was – life? Believe Jesus, again, literally and personally.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17 NASB)

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

Enemies 2

If, *"whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life,"* then only those who love their enemies are His true children since, *"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt 5:44-45a). Jesus' condition of loving one's enemies to see eternal life goes together with His other conditional teachings and warnings of forgiving to continue in His forgiveness, showing mercy to receive it, pardoning to be pardoned, not condemning to not be condemned, turning the other cheek when struck, going another mile after being forced to go one, bearing each other's burdens, and greeting those who do not greet you. A person either wants to just "get saved" to avoid hell or they want salvation to be with Jesus as His body in ministry on earth and in His glory in heaven. They either want to believe just "doctrines about salvation" or to believe the Savior, Himself.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB)

"But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:21 NASB)

Rapture

Since everyone's still here, it's important to recognize a virtually unmentioned verse about "the rapture": *"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth"* (Revelation 3:10). Jesus is promising this "Philadelphian" church, in prophetic church sequence just before the "Laodicean" church, that they would be kept out of the great tribulation, as detailed in the rest of Revelation. This "church" keeping *"the word of My perseverance"* would likely be those in the 15-1600s who pursued holiness and righteousness through relentless persecution and those in the 16-1800s that participated in the explosion of public ministries and world missions that cost thousands of lives. This follows Jesus' plethora of other warnings of "endure to the end," "he who overcomes," and "prepare and be ready" from His red-letter, self-denying, life-losing teachings and commandments. Regardless of the current Laodicean church, keep preparing for *"the hour of testing"* - coming soon to a world near you.

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19 NASB)

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20 NASB)

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21 NASB)

Self-Righteousness

Self-righteousness is not "self-effort." It is self-made, self-invented righteousness that seeks ease, self-honor, and self-promotion so as to not make the effort. Self-made righteousness is the misuse or negating of God's declared ways of righteousness; first spoken through His law and then by Jesus' teachings and commandments. The Pharisees remade God's law to avoid loving their neighbor and to appear to love God in the easiest, most self-honoring ways. Since the Reformation, the church has remade Jesus' teachings and commandments into "faith alone" and "grace alone" to excuse not loving others (Catholics, Jews, other denominations, etc.) and to appear to love God in the easiest, most self-honoring ways by being bearers of God's "truth"…as each of the 80,000 denominations see it. Jesus, Who is the Truth, however, declares that "faith in Him to believe all He taught, alone" with "grace from God to live all He commanded, alone" is true righteousness. His righteousness is for those willing to use His free gift to spend everything for God and their neighbors. Read Jesus, again, literally and personally.

"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3 NASB)

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44 NASB)

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;" (1 John 2:4 NASB)

Deception of Legalism

The Church is supposed to be a lampstand to the world that directly affects its ideas of morality, immorality, and need for God. The church's lampstand is nearly out, however, by the deception that "moralism" is sanctimonious and judgmental. Everyone in the Bible called out immorality, not in their own judgment, but for people to escape God's judgment. Jesus never rebuked the Pharisees for advocating and warning about God's law but for misusing it for their gain: for not desiring its mercy over its judgment, for not acknowledging their own shortcomings in it, and for not implementing its sacrificial love to others. Righteousness comes through the self-denying faith it takes to follow God's law and morality (made clean by blood sacrifice) or follow Jesus' teachings and commandments (cleansed by Jesus' blood). There is false righteousness and false salvation, however, to just look good, get by, and disregard a pure and holy heart.

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:18 NASB)

"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:19 NASB)

Persecuted for Right

Jesus didn't preach the empty gospel of today to just "get saved." He conditioned eternity, for instance, with being persecuted for the sake of what's right (righteousness) with, *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 5:10). This conditional promise includes being persecuted for living out Jesus' teachings and commandments such as the self-denial of forgiving others, desiring mercy for others, rejecting greed, rejecting immorality, taking care of the least of these, giving "the widow's mite," seeking the last place, loving one's enemies, and teaching Jesus' commandments as life. This path of life will conflict with any who are not following Him to label it as "self-righteousness" rather than Jesus' righteousness living through someone. Those who are self-entitled and enabled will always find issues to slander Jesus' light to the world and salt of the earth. However, the reward of being "persecuted for righteousness" is distinct from an even higher reward of being "persecuted for Jesus:"

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me" (Matthew 5:11 NASB)

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:12 NASB)

Homeschool Christian

Every Christian must be homeschooled by Jesus to learn how to walk with God. "A personal relationship" with Jesus is only obtained by yoking oneself with Jesus to learn from Him as He continues growing His Father's kingdom on earth by His words and His deeds. Learning and knowing the "Word of God" is only obtained by doing what the "Living Word" is doing. Faith is no longer by doing the works of the law, but by doing the works of Jesus with Him and Him through us. Go to church, but learn who God is from Jesus. Go to church but learn who Jesus is by ministering to the "least of these" who are at church, and later, to those who are not. The more you learn, the more you don't understand; and the more you do, the more not done by you. And then the more you see how *"His commandments are not burdensome"* and how you have now found true *"rest for your souls."*

"But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers" (Matthew 23:8 NASB)

"Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9 NASB)

"Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ" (Matthew 23:10 NASB)

God's Will

Anyone who asks what God's will is *for* their lives probably doesn't know or understand what God's will is *in* their lives. His will *in* our lives is hard enough: a faith in Jesus that will listen to and believe, so as to live out, literally, His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements. Anyone who knows and understands those realizes that they are the most counter-cultural, counter-church, count-the-cost, self-emptying, cross-bearing, suffer-with-Him, and supplement-His-body teachings that anyone could ever handle, and teachings that can be done and are to be done in any place and time after being born again. That is God's will, and a lifesaving faith in Jesus. It is the only faith that will also bring His promises of peace, purpose, and power, along with the protection of His perfect will no matter what state of the world's demise. It is a life that involves suffering, but one that fellowships with God and with Jesus, who, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8 NASB)

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25 NASB)

Spooky

What's the scariest part of October? Celebrating the Reformation where doctrines of "knowledge make arrogant" were established to delude countless from Jesus' teachings on "love that edifies." Martin Luther, for instance, established "justification by faith alone" to replace Jesus' justification by repentance in *"God be merciful to me, a sinner."* Holiness now comes by faith in doctrines rather than by repentance of sin and the "good fight" to remain holy. Martin Luther established a righteousness of "faith not works" to replace Jesus' teachings and commandments for righteousness of "faith by works." Righteousness now comes by faith in doctrines that Jesus is our substitute righteousness so we don't have to be. Jesus' suffering and death IS our substitute for the punishment of sin, but this substitution has been systematically inflated to eliminate the churches' need to be holy and to pursue Jesus' righteousness on how to love God with everything and how to love our neighbors as ourselves.

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8 NASB)

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10 NASB)

"BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN" (Matthew 15:9 NASB)

Object-ive Faith

The modern church is under dangerous licentiousness for precepts of God's forgiveness to continue practicing sin, and licentiousness for precepts of God's grace that negate any responsibility to live out Jesus' righteousness. Most precepts originate from extensions and perversions of Paul's "Roman Road" doctrines of salvation. Was Paul, therefore, a "false teacher" who taught the church to be licentious? Of course not. God had Paul teach the "why" and "how" of His salvation – its "specifications" or "nuts and bolts." Paul taught how salvation would redirect, not replace, God's law through faith in Jesus' death to forgive sin and faith in Jesus' teachings to continue His life. The licentious church, however, has faith in these "doctrines about salvation" rather than faith that believes Jesus, the author and perfector of faith, with all of His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Examples of *"Whosoever believes in Him,"* rather than "whosoever believes in doctrines" include things like:

"'And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.' My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:34-35 NASB)

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned" (Luke 6:37 NASB)

"Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you" (John 5:14b NASB)

Poor in Spirit 2

While the church celebrates and says, "you'll know Christians by their happiness from God's love," the majority of true Christians continue in private to be "poor in spirit," "mournful," "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," and perpetually ignored or reproved while wanting to do and from doing Jesus' good works. Many are going through God's discipline for sin or for the softening of the heart into good soil for the growth of His Son's character and conduct and for the increased hope of His eternity. Many are realizing, *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22c) and, *"For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ"* (2 Cor 1:5). Jesus told us how we are to live and suffer for Him so that our Christianity will be built on His rock rather than on the sand. Reread His Sermon on the Mount, literally, and apply it, personally.

[God], "who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4 NASB)

"All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness"

"Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble" (Hebrews 12:11-12 NASB)

Sola Scriptura

At the beginning of the reformation, Martin Luther established *Sola Scriptura*, or Scripture alone, to establish the Bible as the ultimate authority in matters of faith. This effectively redirected the guidance of Christian faith from the authority of the Catholic church to the Bible. Unfortunately, it also put scripture into the hands of a select few who would assume the "authority" to provide its "correct" interpretation. Martin Luther, for example, used his authority of scripture to call for the violent "management" of peasants and Jews, and called the Book of James a "book of straw" because it didn't agree with his doctrines. 200 years of subsequent religious wars and 500 years producing 40,000 denominations would suggest that guidance of the "Christian faith" was by the interpreters rather than by scripture. Jesus, however, said He is the Author and Perfector of all faith and that following His red-letter words are the measure of it. Faith in *Sola Scriptura* and faith in *Solus Christos* are not the same.

"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?" (Matthew 7:16)

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17)

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:23b-24a)

Solus Christos

For true Christianity, *Solus Christos* must replace *Sola Scriptura*; that is, Jesus must be the authority for faith lived out rather than Scripture being the authority of knowledge and belief. Believing in and accepting scripture is way easier (and powerless) than believing in and living out Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Jesus is the Author and Perfector of true saving faith, not the acceptance of church doctrines of belief or the varied theologies of men. And *"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of..."* CHRIST (not God), specifically His red-letter, self-denying, life-losing, Father-glorifying, neighbor-loving, yoke-bearing, fruit-bearing, and eternity-securing words of life. For instance, believing one must be "born again" means nothing without seeking to live out: *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions"* (Matthew 6:14-15). *Solus Christos* is faith to *live* by the Savior's commands; *Sola Scriptura* is only faith in doctrines *about* salvation.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them..., Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them..." (Matthew 7:24a, 26a NASB)

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23 NASB)

Scary Love

What should be scarier to Christians than people participating in Halloween? They themselves enjoying every evil under the sun through social media, tv, movies, music, and the world's sensuality. Christians should be totally afraid of the warning, *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15b). Yet, many Christians do so love their modern church doctrines that make them free to ignore, *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world"* (1 John 2:16). Because Jesus is their substitute and God gives grace, many Christians feel free to ignore all of Jesus' covenant teachings and warnings about not loving God with everything and not loving their neighbors as themselves. The scariest thing for a Christian this Halloween, however, must be:

"But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!" (Luke 12:5 NASB)

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17 NASB)

Scary Reform

What should be scarier to Christians than people participating in Halloween? A Reformation leading countless souls to put their faith only in doctrines about salvation, rather than faith in the Savior, Himself. What if Paul wrote about all kinds of supplemental benefits from having faith in Jesus, but Jesus described, in detail, how one would show and live out their faith in Him? What if Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments about that real faith in Him, however, have been supplanted by having faith only in Paul's supplemental benefits? What if faith in Paul's doctrines have become the churches' foundation and faith in Jesus' narrow path of life has been replaced by, "I'm not perfect, just forgiven," "God's not done with me, yet," "when God sees me He sees Jesus," "Jesus is my righteousness because I can't be," and "don't try so hard"? What if the scary Reformation was actually about denouncing the Catholic church rather than reforming the church to Jesus' defined path of life with His accompanying, "rest for your souls," "peace I give to you," and "joy made complete?"

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9 NASB)

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting" (2 John 1:10 NASB)

"for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (2 John 1:11 NASB)

Scary Ist

What should scare Christians the most at Halloween? Christians realizing that Jesus was warning His own disciples to fear God to keep them from being thrown into hell; Christians realizing that Jesus warned His disciples that His Father would hand them over to the torturers if they did not forgive their brothers from their heart; Christians realizing that God's continued forgiveness of them is based on their forgiveness of others; Christians realizing the opposite of *"blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy."* What should scare Christians the most at Halloween? Christians realizing that just "looking in lust" and "remarriage" are on par with all the "worst immoralities" and will be judged; Christians realizing Jesus' warning of *"Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you"* also applies to them; and Christians realizing that all Jesus' warnings of spewing, erasing names, pestilence, cutting and burning unfruitful branches, pulling and burning tares among the wheat, and *"Depart from Me, I never knew you"* applies to them.

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy" (Revelation 22:11 NASB)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

INDEX

Apostasy
Apostasy, Red-Letter Christians, William Booth, Fellowship, Living Faith, The Epitome, Overflow, Bunker Buster, Heaven's Constitution, Christian Narcissism, Faith on the Earth, The Widow's Mite, Fast in Secret, Laodicea, Mamma god, Confess Jesus, Wide Path, Rapture

Anarchy, Chaos
Barbarism, Breakdown, Justice 2, Truth, No "Great Again", Tsunamis, Eye-Site

Anti-Christ
The Embodiment, Barbarism, Tsunamis, Heaven's Constitution, Mamma god, Confess Jesus, No "Great Again", Wide Path, Rapture

Bitterness
Self-Help, Immorality, Victimhood Christianity, Sinfluencers, Intrusive Thoughts, Celebration, Diet, One Flesh, ReMarriage, Repent, Eye-Site, Hospital for Sinners, Peacemakers, Enemies

Boasting
Bragging Rights, The Eternal New Years Baby, Buried Talents, The Widow's Mite, Armchair, Church Leaders, Fast in Secret, Not Perfect

Burnout
Bland, Poison-Antidote, Self-Help, "Hate His Own Life…", Imagine, Wilting, Surrender, Eye-Site, Christian Narcissism, A Blessed Curse

Christian Nationalism
Floods, Red-Letter Christians, The One, Heaven's Constitution, Theophobia, No "Great Again", Wide Path

Christmas
Tis the Season, Christ in Christmas, Christmas Pagans, The Ebenezer Christian, The Eternal New Years Baby, The Scrooge Church

Companionship, Fellowship
Food Delivery, The One, Fellowship, Conditional Love, One Flesh, Father's Day, Poison-Antidote, Immorality, God's Will

Confession
Arthur Blessitt, Thief on the Cross, Unbelieving Perspectives, Confess Jesus, A Friend of Sinners, Tabitha, Ungospeled, Sinfluencers, Christian Tattoos, Prodigal Mocker, Manifest Jesus, Peacemakers

Cross-Bearing
Perfected in Weakness, The Ebenezer Christian, Poison-Antidote, Arthur Blessitt, Only the Losers Win, Platitudes, Intrusive Thoughts, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, "Hate His Own Life…", Walk on Waves, True Religion, Authority, Father's Day, Follow, A Blessed Curse, Suffering 2, Poor in Spirit 2

Devil, Satan
Sinfluencers, The Epitome, The Embodiment, Barbarism, No "Great Again", Wide Path, Truth, Tsunamis, Heaven's Constitution, Mamma god, Confess Jesus, Rapture

Disciples
Bland, Perfected in Weakness, Tis the Season, Blind Faith, Life and Death, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Perfect Partial Faith, Red-Letter Christians, The One, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Imagine, The Embodiment, Theology of Faith, Wilting, Follow, Justice 2, Truth, Persecuted for Right, Homeschool Christian

Enabling
Apostasy, Victimhood Christianity, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Passover, Celebration, Christian Tattoos, Overflow, Eye-Site, Christian Narcissism, Fast in Secret, Persecuted for Right

End Times
Christ in Christmas, Spewed Out, William Booth, The Epitome, Preparation, Overflow, Barbarism, Tsunamis, Eye-Site, Theophobia, Breakdown, Pentateuch, Laodicea, Rapture

Enemies
Stand Up to Hate, The Embodiment, Preparation, Barbarism, Tsunamis, Surrender, Eye-Site, Breakdown, No "Great Again", Enemies

Eternal Security
Once Saved, Always Saved, Worthless and Lazy, Only the Losers Win, The Righteous Judge 2, Apostasy, Eternal Security, Greetings, Conditional Rewards, In Christ Jesus, Doubting Salvation, Kiss Cam, Justice 2, Confess Jesus, Peacemakers, Enemies

Evangelize
Proselytes, Arthur Blessitt, Tabitha, Ungospeled, Follow, Unbelieving Perspectives

Evil
Stand Up to Hate, Sinfluencers, Immorality, The Epitome, Preparation, Tsunamis, Repent, Enemies

False Prophets
Apostasy, #1 Cutting Off Sin, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Church Leaders, The Epitome, The Embodiment, Preparation, Bunker Buster, Heaven's Constitution, Christian Narcissism, Not Perfect, Breakdown, Laodicea, Truth, Confess Jesus, Object-ive Faith

Faith, Saving Faith
Believe-Obey, Blind Faith, Deconstruction, Perfect Partial Faith, Jesus is God, WDJTCWJ?, Platitudes, Living Faith, Theology of Faith, Hearing Aid, Believers, Follow, Forgiving, Early Faith, The Widow's Mite, Fast in Secret, Solus Christos

Faith on the Earth
Justice 2, What if?, Enemies, Self-Righteousness, Justice!, True Religion, Faith on the Earth, Asleep, Laodicea, Only the Losers Win, Excuses 2, Object-ive Faith, Scary Reform

Fear
Buried Talents, The Righteous Judge 2, Repent, Theophobia, Kiss Cam, Justice 2, Life and Death, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Eye-Site

Following Jesus
Bragging Rights, Once Saved, Always Saved, Worthless and Lazy, Believe-Obey, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Reciprocity, Jesus is God, WDJTCWJ?, The One, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Passover, Imagine, Living Faith, The Embodiment, Conditional Love, Wilting, Repent, Surrender, Follow, Early Faith, The Widow's Mite, Fast in Secret, Labor Day, Homeschool Christian

Forgiveness
Lawless Grace, Victimhood Christianity, In Christ Jesus, Passover, Fellowship, Forgiving, Once Saved, Always Saved, Self-Help, Eternal Security, Enemies

Friend of Sinners
A Friend of Sinners, Ungospeled, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Unbelieving Perspectives, Peacemakers, Christian Tattoos, Fellowship, Once Saved, Always Saved, Spewed Out

Free Gift
"Hate His Own Life…", Passover, Tis the Season, Christ in Christmas, Christmas Pagans, The Ebenezer Christian, Doubting Salvation, Celebration

Goats, Tares, Bad Fish, No Oil, Sand, "Lord-Lord..", Fruitless, Unforgiving, Buried Talent, Lawless, Too Busy
Wilting, Heaven's Constitution, Deconstruction, Once Saved, Always Saved, Eternal Security, The Embodiment, Wilting, Preparation, Tis the Season, Buried Talents, Believe-Obey, Lawless Grace, "How, then, shall we live?"

God's Law,
Spewed Out, Lawless Grace, Defense, Christian Tattoos, Pentateuch, Fast in Secret, Laodicea, Intrusive Thoughts, "Hate His Own Life…", Passover, Celebration, True Religion, Manifest Jesus, Believers, Deception of Legalism

Good Works, Good Deeds
Bland, Tis the Season, The Scrooge Church, Tabitha, Buried Talents, Armchair, WDJTCWJ?, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Passover, Imagine, Thief on the Cross, Wilting, Father's Day, Excuses 2, The Widow's Mite, Fast in Secret, Labor Day, Homeschool Christian

Grace, Hyper-grace
Once Saved, Always Saved, A Friend of Sinners, When God Sees Me, Lawless Grace, Apostasy, Eternal Security, Doubting Salvation, Passover, Prodigal Mocker, Overflow, Conditional Love, Behavioral Modification, Bunker Buster, Asleep, Fast in Secret, Laodicea, Self-Righteousness, Object-ive Faith

Greed, Covetousness
The Widow's Mite, The Scrooge Church, Defense, Only the Losers Win

Hate
Stand Up to Hate, "Hate His Own Life…", Barbarism, Justice 2, Enemies, Breakdown, No "Great Again", Tsunamis, Eye-Site

Health
Self-Help, Life and Death, Christian Tattoos, Diet, One Flesh, ReMarriage, Repent, Poor in Spirit, Hospital for Sinners

His Finished Work
Heaven's Constitution, Not Perfect, Pentateuch, Proselytes, Worthless and Lazy, Christ in Christmas, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Celebration, Believers, Faith on the Earth, Homeschool Christian

Holidays
Spooky, Labor Day, Celebration, Heaven's Constitution, Father's Day, Sola Scriptura, Solus Christos, Scary Love, Scary Reform, Scary Ist, Tis the Season, Christ in Christmas, Christmas Pagans, The Ebenezer Christian, The Eternal New Years Baby, The Scrooge Church

Holiness
Sinfluencers, Immorality, Quality, Defense, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Diet, Not Perfect, Hospital for Sinners, Floods

Hospital-Hospice for Sinners
Christian Narcissism, Poor in Spirit, Hospital for Sinners, Peacemakers

Humility
The Eternal New Years Baby, "Hate His Own Life…", ReMarriage, Father's Day, Poor in Spirit, First-Last

Immorality
Deception of Legalism, Spewed Out, Theophobia, Sinfluencers, Immorality, Defense, ReMarriage, Repent

Jesus
Justice Jesus, A Friend of Sinners, The Righteous Judge 2, Jesus is God, WDJTCWJ?, William Booth, Greetings, The One, Passover, Manifest Jesus, Head of the Church, Hearing Aid, Eye-Site, Pentateuch, Persecuted for Right

Judgment
Once Saved, Always Saved, Worthless and Lazy, Spewed Out, The Righteous Judge 2, Eternal Security, Greetings, The Righteous Judge 3, Defense, "How, then, shall we live?", Theophobia, First-Last, Justice 2, Deception of Legalism

Judging
Kiss Cam, The Righteous Judge 2, The GOAT, Deconstruction, Ungospeled, Buried Talents, Passover

Justice
Justice Jesus, Stand Up to Hate, Justice!, Theophobia, Kiss Cam, Justice 2, Sinfluencers, Red-Letter Christians

Knowledge Makes Arrogant
Blowing Smoke, The Epitome, Theology of Faith, Truth, Tis the Season, Armchair Quarterback, Doubting Salvation, Living Faith, Head of the Church, Spooky

Law of Sin
"Hate His Own Life…", Repent, Intrusive Thoughts

Love Edifies
Stand Up to Hate, Theology of Faith, Father's Day, Enemies, Self-Righteousness, Blowing Smoke, Truth, Homeschool Christian, Spooky, Scary Love

Lukewarm
Once Saved, Always Saved, The Righteous Judge 3, Celebration, Unbelieving Perspectives

Marriage
Authority, One Flesh, ReMarriage, Kiss Cam, First-Last, Peacemakers, Defense, Father' Day

Mental Health
Self-Help, Sinfluencers, Immorality, Victimhood Christianity, Intrusive Thoughts, Celebration, Diet, One Flesh, ReMarriage, Repent, Eye-Site, Hospital for Sinners, Peacemakers, Enemies, Doubting Salvation, Overflow, Poison-Antidote

Ministry, Lights, Priests
Tabitha, Ungospeled, Armchair, The One, Imagine, Church Leaders, Walk on Waves, Manifest Jesus, Authority, Believers, Unbelieving Perspectives, Confess Jesus, Peacemakers, Scary Love

Narrow Path
Tis the Season, Life and Death, Buried Talents, Jesus is God, Conditional Rewards, The One, "How, then, shall we live?", Living Faith, Thief on the Cross, Hearing Aid, Bunker Buster, Repent, Asleep, Kiss Cam, A Blessed Curse, First-Last, Wide Path

"No Condemnation…"
Lawless Grace, Jesus is God, Apostasy, Food Delivery, Eternal Security, In Christ Jesus, Doubting Salvation, True Religion, Authority, Hearing Aid, Pleasing, Mamma god, Deception of Legalism, Object-ive Faith

Obedience
Believe-Obey, Arthur Blessitt, Reciprocity, Immorality, WDJTCWJ?, The Righteous Judge 3, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Prodigal Mocker, Living Faith, Diet, Conditional Love, Bunker Buster, Repent, Excuses 2, Pleasing

Perfection
Perfected in Weakness, The GOAT, Perfect Partial Faith, "How, then, shall we live?," Eye-Site, Not Perfect, The Widow's Mite, Proselytes, Bragging Rights, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Homeschool Christian

Perseverance
The Ebenezer Christian, Poison-Antidote, Life and Death, Spewed Out, Only the Losers Win, Intrusive Thoughts, Conditional Rewards, "Hate His Own Life…", "How, then, shall we live?", Walk on Waves, Preparation, Overflow, One Flesh, A Blessed Curse, Suffering 2, Labor Day, Enemies, Poor in Spirit 2

Personal Relationship
Faith on the Earth, Pleasing, Early Faith, Laodicea, Labor Day, Confess Jesus, What if?, Reciprocity, William Booth, Preparation, Overflow, Kiss Cam, Faith On the Earth, Homeschool Christian, Scary Love

Persecution
Preparation, Barbarism, Tsunamis, Surrender, Rapture, Perfected in Weakness, The Ebenezer Christian, Christ in Christmas, Spewed Out, Stand Up to Hate, Only the Losers Win, Persecuted for Right, Poor in Spirit 2

Platitudes
Platitudes, Christian Narcissism, Not Perfect, Pleasing, Truth, Mamma god, Self-Righteousness, Mamma god, Prodigal Mocker, Imitation Proxy, Kiss Cam, Pleasing, Doubting Salvation

Politics
Red-Letter Christians, The One, Heaven's Constitution, Theophobia, No "Great Again", Floods, Wide Path, Eye-Site, Preparation, Stand Up to Hate, Poison-Antidote, Spewed Out, Greetings, Breakdown, Truth

Poor, Least of These, Needy
Food Delivery, Not Perfect, Poor in Spirit, First-Last, The Widow's Mite, The GOAT, Tabitha, Buried Talents, Barbarism, Bland, Christ in Christmas, WDJTCWJ?, Homeschool Christian

Precepts
Proselytes, Once Saved, Always Saved, A Friend of Sinners, Armchair-Quarterbacks, When God Sees Me, Justice!, Victimhood Christianity, Platitudes, William Booth, The Righteous Judge 3, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Imitation Proxy, The Epitome, The Embodiment, Behavioral Modification, Bunker Buster, Christian Narcissism, Not Perfect, Laodicea, Deception of Legalism, Scary Reform

Prophecy
Pentateuch, Worthless and Lazy, Christ in Christmas, Deconstruction, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Spewed Out, Apostasy, Eternal Security, Greetings, The Righteous Judge 3, Defense, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Church Leaders, The Epitome, Bunker Buster, Asleep, Excuses 2, Theophobia, Forgiving, Mamma god

Provision
The Widow's Mite, Eye Site, Justice Jesus, God's Will

Proxy Jesus
Manifest Jesus, Head of the Church, Hearing Aid, Heaven's Constitution, Jesus is God, Head of the Church, Hearing Aid, Pentateuch, Passover, Imitation Proxy

Purpose
The GOAT, Buried Talents, Food Delivery, Eternal Security, Doubting Salvation, Imagine, Fellowship, Manifest Jesus, Overflow, Authority, One Flesh, ReMarriage, A Blessed Curse, Poor in Spirit, Suffering 2, Pleasing, Pentateuch, What if?, God's Will, Poor in Spirit 2

Rest, true and false
Eye-Site, Faith on the Earth, Tis the Season, Immorality, Food Delivery, "How, then, shall we live?", Homeschool Christian

Reformation
The Scrooge Church, Christmas Pagans, Deconstruction, The One, Church Leaders, Blowing Smoke, Head of the Church, Asleep, Early Faith, Laodicea, No "Great Again", Self-Righteousness, Spooky, Sola Scriptura, Solus Christos, Scary Reform

Righteousness
The Scrooge Church, Blind Faith, The Righteous Judge 2, Quality, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Manifest Jesus, Pleasing, Hospital for Sinners, Labor Day, Floods, Peacemakers, Self-Righteousness

Salvation Doctrines
Doubting Salvation, "How, then, shall we live?", Celebration, Prodigal Mocker, Fellowship, True Religion, Head of the Church, Theology of Faith, Believers, Excuses 2, Forgiving, First-Last, Early Faith, Truth, Mamma god, Object-ive Faith, Scary Reform

Self-Denial
Perfected in Weakness, Only the Losers Win, Armchair, Immorality, Intrusive Thoughts, "Hate His Own Life…", Imitation Proxy, Diet, One Flesh, Surrender, God's Will

Sermon on the Mount
Floods, Enemies, Believe-Obey, Doubting Salvation, Justice 2, No "Great Again", Eternal Security, Defense, Preparation, Tsunamis, Asleep, Fast in Secret, Solus Christos

Sin
Apostasy, Immorality, Victimhood Christianity, Defense, #1 Cutting Off Sin, "Hate His Own Life…", Imitation Proxy, Celebration, ReMarriage, Repent, Excuses 2, Theophobia, Hospital for Sinners, Scary Love, Scary Ist

Spiritual Warfare
The Ebenezer Christian, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Intrusive Thoughts, Defense, Doubting Salvation, "How, then, shall we live?", Walk on Waves, Barbarism, Surrender, Eye-Site, Theophobia, Breakdown, Suffering 2, No "Great Again"

Suffering, Tribulation
Christ in Christmas, The Ebenezer Christian, Poison-Antidote, Life and Death, Spewed Out, Platitudes, "Hate His Own Life…", Walk on Waves, Preparation, Overflow, Barbarism, Behavioral Modification, Tsunamis, Surrender, A Blessed Curse, Breakdown, Poor in Spirit, Suffering 2, Floods, Enemies, Rapture, Persecuted for Right, Poor in Spirit 2

The Great Commission - Omission
Jesus is God, Apostasy, WDJTCWJ?, Conditional Rewards, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Doubting Salvation, Passover, Imitation Proxy, Fellowship, Manifest Jesus, Hearing Aid, Follow, Asleep, Truth, God's Will, Spooky, Sola Scriptura, Solus Christos, Scary Reform

Theology
Proselytes, Blind Faith, Deconstruction, Perfect Partial Faith, When God Sees Me, Jesus is God, Apostasy, William Booth, The One, Doubting Salvation, Celebration, Blowing Smoke, The Epitome, Head of the Church, Theology of Faith, Behavioral Modification, Theophobia, Early Faith, Pentateuch, Truth, Rapture, Spooky, Sola Scriptura, Scary Reform

Traditions
Proselytes, Once Saved, Always Saved, Tis the Season, When God Sees Me, Justice!, Red-Letter Christians, Platitudes, Christian Tattoos, Blowing Smoke, The Embodiment, Mamma god, Object-ive Faith, Scary Ist

True Religion
True Religion, Theology of Faith, Authority, Behavioral Modification, Believers, Surrender, Follow, Pleasing, Hospital for Sinners, Labor Day, Peacemakers

Truth
Church Leaders, Living Faith, The Embodiment, Early Faith, Truth, Blind Faith, The Epitome, Self Righteousness

Warnings
Worthless and Lazy, Christ in Christmas, Deconstruction, Armchair-Quarterbacks, Spewed Out, Apostasy, Eternal Security, Greetings, The Righteous Judge 3, Defense, #1 Cutting Off Sin, Church Leaders, The Epitome, Bunker Buster, Asleep, Excuses 2, Theophobia, Forgiving, Mamma god, Scary Ist

Weakness
Perfected in Weakness, Only the Losers Win, Immorality, Intrusive Thoughts, Walk on Waves, Surrender, Asleep, Poor in Spirit, Suffering 2, Hospital for Sinners

"When God Sees Me…"
Lawless Grace, Platitudes, Doubting Salvation, "Hate His Own Life…", Imitation Proxy, Celebration, Prodigal Mocker, Manifest Jesus, Believers, Excuses 2, Heaven's Constitution, Christian Narcissism, Kiss Cam, Pleasing, Mamma god, Scary Ist

Witness
A Friend of Sinners, Arthur Blessitt, Tabitha, Ungospeled, Sinfluencers, Christian Tattoos, Prodigal Mocker, Manifest Jesus, Unbelieving Perspectives, Peacemakers

Works-Life Salvation
Bland, Worthless and Lazy, Tis the Season, Believe-Obey, Christmas Pagans, Blind Faith, Reciprocity, Buried Talents, Food Delivery, Greetings, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Prodigal Mocker, Thief on the Cross, True Religion, Theology of Faith, Diet, Behavioral Modification, Bunker Buster, Believers, Asleep, Labor Day, What if?

Unconditional-Sacrificial Love
In Christ Jesus, #1 Cutting Off Sin, #2 Replacing With Righteousness, Doubting Salvation, "Hate His Own Life…", True Religion, Overflow, Conditional Love, Father's Day, Excuses 2, Christian Narcissism, Faith on the Earth, Forgiving, Suffering 2, Enemies

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Back Cover

More Reel Testimonies of Jesus is a compilation of scripts used for social media, and by far their overriding message is to skip this book and just go to, stay in, and live out the original source: Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Take Jesus' red-letter words literally and seek to live them out, personally, in every circumstance and nerve synapse of life. Faith to follow all that Jesus said *is* saving faith. Only He can disciple us every minute of every day through all life's chaos and sufferings. He did His part in providing the blood for the cleansing of our sin, and He gave His expectations for our part: to follow with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. His words are the quick-start and user guide of how to be a Christian. The apostles provide specifications on why faith works and supplement His teachings, but their teachings do not supplant them. The Old Testament, being completely written about Him, was His prequel. He, alone, is *"the author and perfector of faith,"* and *"faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of _____"* ("Christ" in 99% of translations). True faith is in *following* the Living Word rather than *knowing* the written word. If what He says to you, daily, seems impossible, you're on the "narrow gate and way of life" rather than the "wide gate and way of destruction."