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 seek to hear His voice
to do the will of His Father
and our Father

CONTENTS

Introduction	9	Thoughts and Prayers	28
Scripts of Posted Videos	10		
Do You Believe?	11	Prudent Oil	29
Forgiveness	12	Saving Faith	30
The Love of Money	13	Jesus Theology	31
		The Living Word	32
		Prepper	33
The Least of These	14	Tare Not	34
		#Holiness	35
Stand at the Door	15	#Righteousness	
Tribulation	16	Vessels not Mirrors	36
Judge Not, etc.	17		
The Great Omission	18	Become Ready	37
		Idiot!	38
Become Like Children	19	Prophecy	39
		Dark World	40
Knowing God	20	Forgiveness 2	41
Aliens and Strangers	21	Heroes of Faith	42
		Reformation	43
RockSand	22	Rumors of Wars	44
My Witnesses	23	Enemies	45
Perfection	24	Why God, Why?	46
Discipleship	25	Halloween 1	47
Meekness	26	Halloween 2	48
The Least of These 2	27	Get Saved	49
		Church Theology	50

Video Scripts Continued
Disclosure 51
Mental Health 52
Ears to Hear 53
Spiritual Prepper 54
Quips (Sorry, not sorry) 55
Spirit-Flesh 56
Beatitudes 57
Jesus Families 58
Black Friday 59
Spiritual Cherry Picking 60
The First Stone 61
Epic Fail 62
The Righteous Judge 63
Excuses 64
Peace on Earth 65
Christmas Child 66
Figgy Pudding 67
Gift Returns 68
Distractions 69
Resolutions 70
Daily Grind 71
Fuddy-Duddy 72
Diet Resolutions 73
Jesus Faith 74
Preservation 75
Perfection 2 76
Team Jesus 77
Arguments 78
Fear-Love-Fear 79
Suffering 80
Burdensome 81
Lukewarm 82
Podoselective 83
Selection Day 84
Thrive 85
My Words 86
Brokenness 87
Free Indeed 88
God's Law 89
God First 90
Entitlement 91
In Christ 92
Covenant 93
Unconditional Love 94
God's Law/Cross 95
Pudding 96
No Perfect Church 97
Quantity-Quality 98
Rapture (or Pretrib) 99
Living Water 100
Statements of Faith 101
Filthy Rags 102
Overcomer 103
False Love 104
Not the Same 105
True Love 106
Useful Hypocrisy 107
Church Glasses 108
Jesus Doctrine 109
What's the Point? 110
Think 111
Humility-Repentance Month 112
PFARM 113

Video Scripts Continued
Mercy-Judgment 114
Lust of the Eye 115
Sin 116
Temptation 117
June Bride 118
Self-Identity 119
Social Justice 120
Roman Road 121
AI Pastor 122
Discipline 123
Sight of Faith 124
Law of Faith 125
Humiliation 126
Believe Him 127
Exercise 128
Mockery 129
Bravery 130
Spiritual Psychosis 131
What is Sin? 132
Good Deeds 133
Hope in Suffering 134
The Pursuit of… 135
True Surrender 136
Gold 137
False Inclusive Love 138
Judgment 139
True Inclusive Love 140
Don't Squeeze the Jesus 141
One Path of Life 142
"The (Real) Way" 143
Spew the Pew 144
Wine Press 145
God's Housekeeping 146
Goads 147
Conflict 148
Christianity 149
Christian National 150
Love Hurts 151
Spiritual Politics 152
Jesus is King 153
The Real Platform 154
Index 155
About the Author 163
Back Cover

"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

Who posts Jesus videos and then makes a book out of the scripts? That's serious pathologic arrogance – except if you feel like just a secretary taking dictation (which is, albeit, a noble career choice to those who do) while in-between scripts your living all the unworthy, even sinful ways that you just wrote and warned about. Ugh. Apart from probably spending more time with my head in my hands about this than actually writing scripts and making the videos, Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are where true life is at. Having them saturate my thoughts, actions, and circumstances every second of every day is true life, no matter how much I see myself in conflict with them. But this book, really, is about the fight – the good fight every second of everyday – verses what seems to be an ubiquitous modern church teaching – "no need for that, it's all covered by forgiveness and grace." I would gladly struggle with myself and my ways each day because grasping to remember and obey His teachings is where the peace, purpose, and power are at; it's where the hope of eternity reduces this life into fertilizer for that; and it's where all the aches, pains, tears, disappointments, and longings have their meaning and their eventual glory which will be a small, shared part of His longsuffering and eternal glory.

SCRIPTS OF PUBLISHED VIDEOS

Do You Believe?

Do you believe in Jesus for salvation? Do you believe Jesus forgives our sins? What if it wasn't believing Jesus for salvation, but rather our belief in Jesus that saves us? For instance, do we believe Jesus when He says, "For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly father will also forgive you!" But, if you do not forgive others then your father will not forgive you." Therefore, our belief in Jesus to forgive others is a living expression of our faith that leads to salvation.

"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)

Forgiveness

What are the worst insults or injuries that we've experienced by someone? As Christians, Jesus commands that we forgive others so that our own sins will continue to be forgiven. Although God's Spirit gives us the power, forgiveness is usually bottlenecked by our unwillingness to do it. True forgiveness, however, pulls up the roots of bitterness for both past and present offenders. Bitterness is then replaced by peace with the world, and a better appreciation for what it cost Jesus to forgive our sins.

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

The Love of Money

What if most people have heard the phrase, "money is the root of all evil?" But what if that's not correct since the Bible actually says, *"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil?"* Clearly, money does not account for ALL evil. Rather, it is the LOVE of money and not money itself, from which evil grows. Also, the Bible version fits better with Jesus' other commands: to beware of all forms of greed, to be content with whatever God provides, and to live for His kingdom instead of this world.

"And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity." (Luke 8:14 NASB)

The Least of These

As a Christian, imagine spending your time and money on someone who will waste or misuse it. What if that was called enabling? Imagine, however, that God has been "enabling" all people with "all good things" since the beginning of history. What if God provides all good things to people, regardless of their disinterest or dislike of Him? This is why Christians are called to show mercy and compassion for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, poorly-clothed, sick, and imprisoned. They are to take care of the "Lazaruses at the rich man's gate" and the "Least of These, My brethren."

"Then He will answer them, saying, '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.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:45-46 NASB)

Stand at the Door

What if Jesus' phrase, *"behold, I stand at the door and knock"* was never a call for salvation? Rather, He is warning the church to repent of its indifference towards good works. It is likely that Paul's teaching of "not saved by works" has also been implied to mean, "not living as a Christian by works, either." For instance, we often hear that Christians are to "rest in His completed work," to "bask in the riches of God's grace," and to "know that nothing but the cross is needed." These expressions, however, echo more of Jesus' severe warning, *"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). But Jesus is still knocking for us to let Him in so that He can live out, through us, the good works and holiness that He told us and showed us to do.

"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 5b-6 NASB)

Tribulation

The New Testament is saturated with the hopefulness and purpose that suffering and impending death bring to a Christian. They show our need of Jesus, disciple us to become more like Him, shake our pride, sanctify us, perfect God's power in us, and provide opportunity to fellowship with Jesus. A few examples from scripture include: Jesus *"learned obedience through the things He suffered," "the poor are rich in faith," "Blessed are the poor in spirit…the mournful…the persecuted…and the insulted,"* and Paul *knew* Jesus through the fellowship of His sufferings and conformation of His death.

"They returned…, 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 14:21b-22 NASB)

Judge Not, etc.

Jesus warns Christians to *"not judge, lest you be judged."* But He also warns them about not testifying of Him, not seeking the last place, not showing mercy, not forgiving others, not taking care of "the least of these," and not following His narrow path of life. Christians are not to judge now because there will soon be a final judgment for both Christians and the world. Since Jesus calls all Christians to pursue His perfect life, even with their short comings, we cannot judge anyone, but only point to Him in word and deed with everything that He's given us.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." (Matthew 5:7 NASB)

The Great Omission

Most Christians know that the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is to preach the gospel. But what if there was also a "Great Omission" from that commission? This largely ignored omission is Jesus' directive to *"make disciples"* (of Him), *"...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."* Although the gospel describes what God has done for us, the omission describes what we are to do for God. Our part of the *New Covenant* is seen in the details of the New Testament on how we are to love God with everything and how we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. At the Judgment, the true children of God will have had a life that sought to obey and follow His Son.

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4 NASB)

Become Like Children

Jesus often uses the nature of children as a role model for our Christian lives. He says things like, *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 18:4) and, *"Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes"* (Luke 10:21b) and, *"Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; ... for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great."* (Luke 9:48b) and, *"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND NURSING INFANTS YOU HAVE PERFECTED PRAISE"* (Matthew 21:16b NKJV). Thus, conversion (or a sinner's prayer) is one thing, but *becoming* like a child is another.

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

Knowing God

An intimate knowledge of God does not come from a sinner's prayer, attending church, or memorizing Bible verses. We only begin to know God as we work alongside His Son in His spiritual analogies of fishing, planting, harvesting, or tending sheep. Jesus, Himself, teaches us as we take up and share His yoke (Matthew 11:29) to forgive others, to show mercy, to not covet this world, to bear other's burdens, to seek the last place, to testify of Him, and to humble ourselves. Sharing His yoke in this world represents the true Christian life and the only place where we will ever find *"rest for our souls."*

"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)

Aliens and Strangers

Jesus warns that the lawlessness preceding the End Times will cause most people's love to grow cold. As such, many Christians who seek to love God and their neighbors feel even more like aliens and strangers in this world. Therefore, we must remember that, although Jesus loved people, He did not put His trust in them, but rather, was in constant fellowship with His Father. Likewise, Paul was often abandoned in his hardships but knew that he was already seated in the heavenly places with Christ, and he instructed us to set our minds on those things, also. We should therefore live as though we already reside and fellowship in the kingdom of Heaven, although we must mentally and willfully commute, each day, to our work of ministry in the temporary kingdoms of this world.

"what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3 NASB)

RockSand

Jesus instructs His church to learn, now, how to be lights in a dark world that has an incredible potential for death and destruction. WWII, alone, saw about 75 million deaths over 6 years. For comparison, that's equal to about 750 WWII-era atomic bombs or about 10x the current number of Covid-related deaths. Jesus, however, said to be ready, not as material "preppers" who stock up on supplies or ammunition, but as spiritual "preppers" who learn how to forgive, now; learn how to turn the other cheek, now; learn how to bear other's burdens, now; and learn how to love one's enemies, now so that we will be prepared, even in the face of utter darkness, to do them later.

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall." (Matthew 7:26-27 NASB)

My Witnesses

Although some Christians are called to be evangelists, all Christians are called to be witnesses of Jesus in their lives. Detailing the "propitiation of sins" is fine as the opportunity arises. However, we are always to testify of and display Jesus, to each other and the world, using everything He's given us. Jesus said that we are His lights by which other's will give glory to God for the good works that they see Him do through us. From there, the Holy Spirit will convict, convince, and convert each Christian all the way from their spiritual birth to their transforming death.

"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:20-21 NASB)

Perfection 2

Jesus calls all Christians, "to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Yet, we know that no one, except Jesus, is perfect. Therefore, perfection occurs when we live out Jesus' teachings and commandments. If, for example, you sin and genuinely seek forgiveness from God - that's perfect. If you, in turn, forgive someone who has sinned against you - that's perfect. If forgiving is hard, but you persevere to keep forgiving - that's perfect. What's not perfect, however, is saying, "nobody's perfect so why bother," or "Jesus was perfect, so I don't have to be," or "God loves me just the way I am." Those teachings quench the Holy Spirit and bury the talent that Jesus has given us to invest in His Father's glory, and that's seriously - not perfect.

"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)

Discipleship

The only theologian who can disciple a Christian is Jesus; the only Pastor who can guide a Christian's thoughts, emotions, and actions is Jesus; and the only denomination that Jesus will label as "true" will consist of individuals, all over the world and throughout history, who strove to listen to Him in order to become like Him.

"And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.'" (Matthew 12:49-50 NASB)

Meekness

Jesus' teachings and commandments (like in His Sermon on the Mount) are certainly weak according to the elemental principles of how this world works. That is because His goals don't include preserving any of the traditions, politics, lifestyles, or worldviews of this very temporary world inhabited by its very temporary vessels. His teachings and commandments represent how life will be in His holy, separated kingdom of heaven for all eternity. His true children are expected to live them, now, in order to prepare and prove themselves for later. In contrast, His warnings and judgments about His teachings and commandments are not at all weak, just largely ignored, shunned, or "doctrinally" negated.

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand." (Matthew 7:26 NASB)

The Least of These 2

Jesus says that our final judgement, our proof of being God's children, will be determined by how we loved "the least of these" (Matthew 25). Our purpose, in this vapor of a life, is not to live our lives, but to have Jesus live His life through us. We demonstrate a worship of love, not with songs, but with the love of our neighbor who is in need. Jesus said that ministering to those who are hungry, thirsty, alienated, poorly clothed, sick, or imprisoned are equivalent to showing our love for Him. He already cares and provides for all people, and we are expected, in our child-like efforts, to join Him. His words and deeds, from the smallest greeting to loving one's enemies with a humble heart, are our guide.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24 NASB)

Thoughts and Prayers

"Thoughts and prayers," according to the Bible, ARE truly not enough, because they are to be daily backed up by "righteousness" or "good works." It is the path of righteousness, however, that matters to God. There is a path described by humanism, the Angel of Light, that differs from the one detailed by Jesus, the true Light. The former looks to fix a temporary world, according to its own ideology, and it will never bring peace. In contrast, Jesus' only Path of Peace calls us to prepare ourselves and others for a permanent kingdom, according to God's sacrificial love displayed through us. The human path is described, daily, in the news and media, while Jesus' path is detailed in His Sermon on the Mount and throughout the New Testament.

"DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN. THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." (Romans 3:16-18 NASB)

Prudent Oil

The "woke" movement is only a spiritual mockery of the Church's 10 virgins who were ALL asleep before the End Times. While the world, in enmity with God, has always looked to "gain" its desires, Jesus' message is always our own "cost" for His kingdom. Although Jesus paid the ultimate price, He expects His true children, in kind, to follow Him. We experience the cost of "prudent oil" by not coveting, forgiving others, desiring mercy above justice, bearing other's burdens, seeking the last place, turning the other cheek, loving our enemies, and dying to "self." Learning the cost of these things, now, is the only tactic given to light our way through the utter darkness, later.

"and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds…, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25b NASB)

Saving Faith

What if Jesus described "saving faith" as way more than just a sinner's prayer, or agreeing to a church's "Statement of Faith," or believing that God will get you through life? What if, rather, true faith was living according to Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments? What if this is the type of faith that God will see as proof of our having been born again as His legitimate children? What if Jesus' blood isn't a pass to get us into heaven, but a sacrifice to cleanse us on our journey there? What if "saving faith" was never about acquiring "eternal life" but about learning to live a real life that will last for eternity?

"By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." (1 John 3:10 NASB)

Jesus Theology

Jesus' teachings have not "evolved" to follow either conservative or liberal church doctrines. Jesus' teachings detail how to start and live out real life in the way He designed it. There is a constant recognition of sin in both ourselves and others, with one's personal experience affirming that sin is mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually destructive (and eventually lethal). A Christian strives to replace their own sin with God's mercy and purpose, and to expose the world's sin by their own testimony and by displaying Jesus' mercy in both His words and deeds to others.

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38 NASB)

The Living Word

Faith in "The Word of God" and faith in "The Living Word of God" are two different things. The first is Bible knowledge and the second is believing that Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments are necessary for salvation and eternal life. Both history and the current church demonstrate all kinds of ways to live by "Bible knowledge." In contrast, Jesus' teachings to humble ourselves, seek the last place, love our enemies, not covet anything, forgive everyone, testify of Him, turn the other cheek, be peacemakers, and lose our life to gain it are His narrow path to life. Jesus is God and He has the preeminence in all things, including scripture. His instructions, alone, provide the foundation on which the rest of the Bible can be understood and applied.

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

"When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying…" (Matthew 5:1-2 NASB)

Prepper

The next step in Jesus' End Times prophecy is, *"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away…"* (Matthew 24:9-10a). Of course, many will fall away since who has been trained to endure that kind of hatred, tribulation, and death for Jesus? Yet, we are repeatedly warned to be prepared, not materially, but spiritually. A spiritual prepper does not stock up on food or ammo, but on experiences of loving one's enemies, seeking the last place, desiring mercy for all, being oppressed yet going another mile, and daily losing one's life in bearing their cross. Jesus strongly warns us to train in His ways, now, to endure a tribulation that will soon be upon more than 8 billion people.

"Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." (Matthew 24:22 NASB)

Tare Not

Jesus said there would be tares among the wheat, illegitimate Christians, and wolves in the fold - with Judas being the prototype. The Apostles also described Christians who became enemies, those who became sick or dead from unrepentance, and others who mislead by their teachings. The New Testament repeatedly warns that these failures result from people who want the title of being God's child but shun the expectations for being one. In addition, people will glean the expectations to make things easier, create traditions, or be more popular. These warnings, however, are for us to examine and test our faith. We are to daily verify that it's based on the expectations of Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap." (Luke 21:33-34 NASB)

#Holiness #Righteousness

Jesus must live through us in both holiness and righteousness. Holiness is the character of our heart to align our will to God's will. Righteousness is Jesus' good works conducted through us to the world. Holiness is vertical while righteousness is horizontal, and the two often interact. For instance, *"God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor 9:7b) reveals that "giving" is the righteousness (or conduct) and "cheerful" is the holiness (or character) of our heart in that giving. Similarly, *"But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"* (Mat 6:3). In this case, holiness is doing Jesus' righteousness for God's approval rather than for the approval of others.

"so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:4 NASB)

Vessels not Mirrors

"When God sees me, He sees Jesus" – NOT. He will, however, see Jesus living through us, if Jesus is truly living through us. He sees us as fruit or as thistle, on the rock or on the sand, as lights on a stand or under a bushel basket, salty to produce thirst or tasteless to be trampled, prudent with oil or dark and shut out, as sheep or as goats, as wheat or as tares, with eyes full of light or full of darkness, as Jesus followers or as lawless, building with gold-silver and precious stones or wood-hay and stubble, as legit or illegit, and as a Peter or as a Judas. We are not mirrors for Him to see Himself, but vessels of His Holy Spirit who are expected to pour out His holiness and righteousness to the world.

"Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 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 5:9-10 NASB)

Become Ready

"Knowledge" of the rapture is just another red herring to distract us from Jesus' unambiguous commands and warnings to make ourselves ready for His return-because many will not be. For instance, He said, *"You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect"* (Luke 12:40), *"But they all alike began to make excuses"* (Luke 14:18), *"but those who were invited were not worthy"* (Mat 22:8), *"and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut"* (Mat 25:10), *"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved"* (Mat 24:13). His teachings and His life tell us what to practice in order to become ready. They're His idea of a "personal relationship."

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-27 NASB)

Idiot!

Jesus set the standard for our thoughts and our hearts with, *"whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell"* Matthew 5:22b. For me, thinking of someone as a fool or an idiot brings the conviction, confession, and cleansing on an all too frequent basis. More inspiration is also found from being told that our standard of measure will be measured back to us. By this process, the written word becomes the Living Word, and Jesus' path of peace, and peace with others, is maintained.

"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)

"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 NASB)

Prophecy

The "Precepts of Men" and "Doctrines of Demons" can always be backed up in Bible lessons by a verse here or a couple of verses there. But their emphasized importance has nothing to do with the heart or purposes of God. A very easy way to differentiate this is to ask oneself, "did Jesus actually teach this?" or "was this important to Jesus?" One should also ask, "was this usually true for Jesus' life or the lives of His apostles?" The main influencer of our lives must always be Jesus (every day, every hour). Next are His apostles, and then those throughout history who have given all, suffered, and/or died for Him. This is because, *"the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"* (Revelation 19:10b) so that we can all become those kinds of prophets.

"Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings,…what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:10-13 NASB)

Dark World

What if Satan said that he was the owner/operator of all nations (Luke 4:5-6)? What if the Apostle John says that the whole world is under Satan's power (1 John 5:19)? What if Jesus told the Jews that their father was the devil? (John 8:31-47). What if He said that because everyone is spiritually raised by Satan unless they are born again and grow up again by following Him? What if these things mean that 1) God's kingdom isn't dependent on a nation's politics, but on us persevering to deliver it to others in both word and deed; and 2) that we should now see everyone as being in or having come from a lifetime of spiritual captivity, abuse, and enslavement, yet having the absolute potential to shine like angels for all eternity?

"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)

"For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers." (1 Timothy 4:10 NASB)

Forgiveness 2

Why does Jesus command that we forgive? 1) Unforgiveness produces roots of bitterness in our physical, mental, and emotional health. The cumulative effect of unforgiveness is like a timebomb, which has become evident in society. Therefore, forgiveness is essential for us to be on Jesus' path of peace. 2) Forgiveness affects the offender. Jesus asked His Father to forgive those who crucified Him. At his stoning, Stephan did likewise. Therefore, daily forgiveness (becoming like a reflex) is essential for how we love our neighbor. 3) Jesus' warnings about unforgiveness make it a signature trait for our salvation and spiritual legitimacy. Forgiveness is not done by warm fuzzies; it must be sheer willingness. The warm fuzzies, buffer against further angst, peace with others, and communion with Jesus come after.

"and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:6 NASB)

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7 NASB)

Heroes of Faith

The church often highlights faults in the Bible's heroes of faith so that we'll know God is still able to use us. Although appealing, this teaching doesn't highlight the years of perseverance, suffering, and utter self- sacrifice that God counted as faith. Furthermore, Jesus didn't praise His disciples for their self-seeking and lack of faith and perseverance. He didn't coddle the religious leaders, and He didn't sugarcoat Jerusalem' impending destruction due to unbelief. Things weren't "still ok" for Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, or those in "sin leading to death." God has no use for our self-seeking and lack of faith and perseverance; they're for cleansing by His Son's precious blood. He will, however, use our faith to have them forgiven and to then live out all His Son's teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments.

"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 ... but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:25, 27 NASB)

Reformation

What if the reformation was God's way for making His word more accessible to follow His Son, but Satan's deception was to divert people away from Jesus' teachings and onto various red herring theologies? Instead of learning and experiencing the peace, purpose, and power of being yoked to Jesus' ways and life, many reformers inferred that true faith was accepting "their correct" doctrines of predestination, communion, baptism, and/or the trinity. While the reformation brought in "justification by faith", the faith was then redirected to "Bible knowledge" rather than to Jesus and His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Jesus, in turn, was allowed to be a type of doormat for our sins. His theology, however, will be the same yesterday and today and forever.

"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:50 NASB)

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

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does/does not act upon them…" (Matthew 7:24-27 NASB)

"For I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison and you…" (Matthew 25:31-46 NASB)

Rumors of Wars

"Wars and rumors of wars." Ever since Able gave an able offering and Cain caned Abel, people have hurt and killed each other over entitlement or victimhood, with the firm conviction that they are *"like God, knowing good and evil."* Contrary to church teaching that we can't ever do well, God DOES want us to "do well," and in so doing have our *"countenance* [not boastfulness] *be lifted up."* First, His law was hope to do well, and could be done (unknowingly) by faith. Second, His Son IS a life of doing well, if followed (not acknowledged) by faith. Being part of a family with everyone participating, working together, and lifting each other up will lift our countenance. Only Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments lead us to, and keep us in, His spiritual family under any circumstance.

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.'" (Genesis 4:6-7 NASB)

Enemies

Christians have always been called to battle, compete, and seek victory, but in a spiritual rather than physical world. If they believe it, they are completely armored but have only one weapon: the Sword of the Holy Spirit, God's word. The sword of Jesus' teachings is our only strategy to victory by loving (rather than hurting) our enemies through forgiveness, mercy, compassion, prayer, testifying of Jesus, and laying down our own lives rather than theirs. In this way, the enslaved, abused children being used by God's real enemy, Satan, are exposed to the light, freedom, and life of Jesus. In addition, we glorify God, fellowship with His Son in suffering, and keep ourselves in the perfect will and protection of God.

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:44-45 NASB)

Why God, Why?

Why did God make me this (physical, mental, emotional, or social) way? Because, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit…"* and *"Blessed are the meek…"* Because, *"did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs…to those who love Him?"* (James 2:5). Because, *"so that the works of God might be displayed in him."* (John 9:3). Because, *"God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty"* (1Cor 1:27). Yet we are all called to follow Jesus with whatever heart, soul, mind, and strength that God has allotted.

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 NASB)

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4 NASB)

Halloween 1

Christians should love two opportunities of Halloween. 1) It's a time to remind people that both death and the gospel are knocking on the door of each person's life, and 2) Jesus, Himself, is knocking on the door of each lukewarm Christian who has denied that the "good deeds" of His teachings and commandments are the true expression of "saving faith" (Rev 3:15-22). God continues to allow time for the world to repentant, and He continues to wait before His promise to spew out the lukewarm church. So this Halloween, don't hide Jesus' light under a bushel basket: pass out some scripture candy, display a bumper sticker with Jesus' name, and pray in your heart for the peace of Jesus in each child and their family. If you're not shining His light, you're still part of the darkness.

"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)

Halloween 2

In contrast to Halloween, there is hope and purpose in suffering and death that was enacted by God since the beginning. This physical life is temporary and difficult for a purpose. Physical life is only a stage for discovering God through Jesus and a proving ground for saving faith as expressed by living out by Jesus' teachings and commandments. No matter how difficult, painful, or grievous, every nerve and thought are designed to tell us that real life is spirit, not flesh. In the presence of infinity, suffering and death will have only been a "momentary light affliction" by which God raised us as His true children. Jesus, our long-suffering God, leads us through this short-suffering life to have real life with Him, forever.

"We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (James 5:11 NASB)

"And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4 NASB)

Get Saved

Jesus didn't die for us to just "get saved." That teaching is for people who just want a "get out of jail – and into heaven" -free card. He died to give us a purpose in this shallow, self-seeking, help yourself, and screw others world. He died so that we can be His mouth, hands, and feet for those who are also sick of it or those who are dying from it. Jesus didn't die to supplement our lives, He died so that we can supplement His life, and in so doing, share His peace, purpose, power, and rewards forever. No matter how great or how small one is in this life, they can have those things. "Getting saved" mostly brings stagnation; believing Jesus to follow Him always brings life.

"It 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." (Matthew 20:26-27 NASB)

"for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." (Luke 9:48b NASB)

Church Theology

The New Testament is impossible to understand unless one takes off the church theology glasses. Church theology has teased apart God's New Covenant to separate God's promises and resulting blessings from what He expects of us to share in those promises and blessings. The fluffy, feel-good verses are separated from the stark warning and judgment verses so that anyone who actually tries reading the New Testament just scans for their "favorite verses" and leaves the hard stuff to the "theologians." Sermons, Sunday School lessons, Bible Studies, and mountains of "christian" literature solidify this theology and remove any need for us to look further. The only way out is to individually become yoked to Jesus and ask Him to disciple us and teach us His narrow path of 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)

Disclosure

The Reformation brought the authority of scripture and belief in the Bible to the church. Unfortunately, "belief in scripture" produced many paths of Christianity other than Jesus' path of life. Belief in church doctrines is not belief to follow Him. As we believe Jesus to live out His commandments, He discloses more of Himself to embrace more of His ways. Knowledge before obedience, however, leads the church into Jesus' constant warnings of the blind leading the blind, fruitlessness Christianity on the sand, being tares in the wheat, being illegitimate, expressing thorns and thistles, and living like goats rather than sheep. *"Knowledge* [even Bible knowledge] *makes arrogant" but "love* [through following Jesus] *edifies."*

"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)

Mental Health

How many people have to live horribly and then die from substance abuse? How many others have to suffer and make others suffer from their personal "issues"? No one will be completely healed by just "getting saved" (at least for me) but by the power of salvation that includes Jesus' commands to forgive others (parents, family, friends, associates). This removes the constant bitterness which leads to anger, disappointment, or resentment, which leads to depression, low self-esteem, or other mental issues (at least for me). God's stability comes through a carte blanche level of forgiveness, followed by more forgiveness, followed by ministering to and loving those who hurt us. In this way, further insults become powerless by the empowerment of being Jesus' priests of redemption. Any leftover mental or emotional scarring will only contribute to His blessings of being "poor in spirit," "mournful," or "gentle."

"Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 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 12:9b-10 NASB)

Ears to Hear 1

Jesus gave His Sermon on the Mount to train the church to follow Him and be prepared for His return. If most churches believed His Sermon, then why wouldn't they also be dumbfounded by the difficulties on how to live it out? Why wouldn't they see Jesus' expectations as ridiculous and incompatible with normal life? Why wouldn't the church also be alarmed by His dozens of warnings and judgments for not seeking to make it a literal part of life? To do this, passive knowledge must be replaced with the "how to" learning of testimonies, case studies, workshops, and play-acting to train for the cost of living it out. At this point, however, that's unlikely and each person must take it upon themselves to live out His Sermon as literally as possible.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a…"

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who…" (Matthew 7:24a, 26a NASB)

Spiritual Prepper

Jesus' SOM (Sermon on the Mount) tells us how to prepare for "the storm." But the endurance to be poor in spirit, be peacemakers, and be ignored, negated, or persecuted for Jesus are not "the storm" but the training for it. The endurance to not resist an evil person, turn the other cheek to be hit again, give one's coat after having them take your shirt, and go another mile after having been forced to go one, are not "the storm" but the training for it. The endurance to greet those who don't greet you, love those who don't love you, and love one's enemies are not "the storm" but the training for it. And the endurance to daily pick up one's own cross to obey His commands is not "a crucifixion" but the training for it.

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand" (Matthew 7:26 NASB)

"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)

Quips (Sorry, not sorry)

The scripture ears of the modern church be like…"This is My Beloved Bible, with which I am well pleased: memorize it!" "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by any old scripture (or Statement of Faith) which is easiest to swallow." "This here *book* is the way, the truth, and the life." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to be a doormat to wipe their sin on before entering heaven." "The spirit, his/her/itself, testifies through our church spirit that we're all God's children and, through Jesus finished work alone, we all get a mansion, a crown, and a prize – if indeed we continue to let everyone know there's no need to suffer with Him." Whoever wishes to live their own life, the way they want it, can do so because I, Jesus, sacrificed mine for that."

"For by grace you have been saved through faith in church doctrines; and that not of yourselves, those doctrines (and the reformers who gave them) are God's gift to us; not as a result of works (especially not those done as an expression of faith in Jesus – which saves), so that no one may boast while still living their old lives, waiting for the rapture."

Spirit-Flesh

Each person has a relationship between the flesh and the spirit. The world can only live by the flesh but considers it, in various ways, to be spiritual. Comparatively, moralism sets standards for what type of fleshly living is ok and considers it to be spiritual. The modern church, however, considers moralism to be self-righteous, states that nobody is righteous, and that spirituality is only found by faith is God's forgiveness and grace. In contrast, Jesus' idea of spirituality is for people to believe Him through (in priority to the rest of the Bible) His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements about how to live. In this way, repentance and obedience merge, mere moralism is replaced by losing one's life to follow Him, and forgiveness and grace are given and received in their proper context.

"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)

"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. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal." (John 12:24-25 NASB)

Beatitudes

The "Beatitudes" are not a list of easy ways to be happy. They are self-sacrificing conditions from which come hope in persevering through life's suffering. Taken literally, they show the advantages of lowliness in life, prepare Christians to minister in a dark world, give reasons for suffering, and provide incentive for eternal rewards. They provided total purpose for living in despair and defeat and are the reasons to keep living out God's goodness when life seems utterly contrary and pointless. Imagine the promise of blessing in all the mental "angst," in mourning the loss of culture and life, in being a peacemaker amongst ubiquitous hate, in extending mercy to receive God's mercy, in desiring God's right ways for everyone, in being childlike, in being hated for good, and in being promised great reward when it's all done 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)

Jesus Families

What if Jesus expects His teachings to be used in every relationship, including families? What if His commandments gave life to being a spouse, parent, or even a child? What if, in obedience to Him, family members forgave each other unconditionally, did not let the sun go down on their anger, confessed their sins, confessed Jesus, bore each other's burdens, sought nothing in return, sought the last place, did not love the world, and considered each other as more important? What if Jesus said the lowliest position (even a child's) bears the most fruit and is viewed as the greatest in God's kingdom? What if teaching Jesus' ways is the only way to keep Him as the life goal, and what if at least one person seeking His ways will bring healing and thriving.

"but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44 NASB)

"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4)
"for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." (Luke 9:48b NASB)

Black Friday

While Christmas lights echo Jesus as the light of the world, Christmas gifts echo an expression of faith through the love of others. At its origins, however, Jesus taught us how to express our faith by targeting our love to *"the least of these, My brethren"* (Matthew 25), to our enemies, and to those who cannot give back. In addition, we are to give cheerfully, with an open hand (rather than closed fist), without the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing, and without coveting anything in return. Even more, we are to give forgiveness, mercy, and humility, and by considering others as more important. Although Jesus' Christmas gift to us is peace, purpose, and power, it must be daily opened and used by seeking to live out the good works He expects.

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." (Luke 2:14 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)

Spiritual Cherry Picking

Jesus called out the Pharisees because they "cherry picked" His law to make it easy, to replace it with their traditions and doctrines, and to make them feel confident about being His people. Similarly, modern Christianity has cherry picked the New Testament (NT) to highlight Paul's doctrines on "God's grace," "faith-not-works," and "the propitiation of sins." In addition, Jesus is *contained* by "John 3:16," by being "born again," and by Him "knocking on the door of our hearts." All these teachings, however, include little of the almost 8000 NT verses that detail what life-losing faith will look like (and not look like), and what Jesus' expectations, conditions, and verifications are for His forgiveness. They also state how God gives grace for seeking to live out His Son's teachings and His patience before judging those who don't.

"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)

"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)

The First Stone

"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" must be daily expanded upon in our minds as: 1) *"Let him who is without…*[immorality, covetousness, sensuality, complaining, superiority, love of the world, pride, selfishness or disdain or disregard of others]" 2) *"cast the first…*[sneer, chuckle, eye roll, "idiot," head wag, gossip, malice, freeze out, finger, expletive, fist shaking, outburst, or lawsuit]." The only correct response to the darkness in others is recognition of God's mercy for us despite the current darkness within ourselves.

"God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (Luke 18:13b NASB)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7 NASB)

Epic Fail

Epic Fail: "Although repentance of sin and following Jesus are necessary for being a Christian, don't worry because nobody is perfect and God loves you just the way you are." Unfortunately, God does not love you just the way you are because He uses His Son's blood to clean your sins as you change your life's pursuits to the perfect life taught and demonstrated by His Son. The deceiver of the church has both generalized God's love and negated Jesus' call to perfection by introducing doctrines and precepts that contradict Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. The doctrines and precepts have been solidified by a million churches and ministries that seek the approval of people by ignoring and negating Jesus' narrow path of life. Read Jesus' words again, literally, and pursue them always, however imperfectly, to become His refined, legitimate, and perfect children.

"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)

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

"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" (Matthew 7:21 NASB)

The Righteous Judge

If Jesus says that I've left my first love and must overcome in order to eat of the tree of life, I believe Him. If He says that I must be faithful until death to receive the crown of life, I believe Him. If He says that I'm required to overcome to not be *"hurt by the second death,"* I believe Him. If He says that I must overcome to receive some of the hidden manna and a white stone with my new name, I believe Him. If He says that He will throw immoral Christians into great tribulation and pestilence, I believe Him. And if He says that He will give to each according to their deeds, I believe Him. Faith in Jesus and faith in church doctrines are not the same.

"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" (Revelation 2:22 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)

Excuses

Excuses by God's church to keep living in sin and not bother pursuing Jesus' life: "God loves me just the way I am," "nobody's perfect," "nobody's better than anybody else," "can't do more than Jesus' finished work," "I'm not perfect just forgiven," "when God sees me He sees Jesus," and "don't judge me, only Jesus can judge me" (yikes!). Unfortunately, Jesus saved us to change us into His image, Jesus called us to perfection, Jesus will determine *who was* better and reward them accordingly, Jesus' "work" is only continued by His true believers, when God sees us He sees if His Son is living through us – or not, and Jesus will be the judge of each person's eternity.

"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)

"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)

Peace on Earth

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (NKJV). Oops! Forgot that important, limiting condition: *"with whom He is pleased"* (every other version). "*And without faith it is impossible to please Him."* And it's not faith in Roman Road theology, the propitiation of sins, the Bible, church doctrines, or even that God is there for us. It's faith to believe Jesus in how He told us to react, to feel, to think, and to live (heart, soul, mind, and strength). His ways are the only path of peace for life. He is the only Moses, Aaron, Melchizedek, Judge, Prophet, Apostle, Disciple, Priest, Church founder, Pastor, or ministry leader that must be constantly heard and followed. He told us that the rest are either pointers, supplementers, distractors, or even detractors.

"Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34b-35 NASB)

Christmas Child

Christmas is for children, and Jesus is for children, and Jesus said that adults must be both converted and become like children to enter His kingdom. In character, children are much less or not at all concerned with "the knowledge of good and evil" for others. They only seek to imitate those around them, and, in the case of a Christian adult child, that would be in daily imitating their heavenly Father by following His Son's spoken instructions and self-sacrificing deeds. Jesus calls all believers to pursue greatness by becoming "the least" here on earth. And it will be the "least of these," the humble child, the servant even slave to others, the poor in spirit, the meek, the Lazaruses, the crippled, and those willing to lay down their lives who will be the greatest in His kingdom.

"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)

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Ephesians 5:1-2 NASB)

Figgy Pudding

Figgy pudding. Clearly, Christmas treats have changed since the 1300s, but the spiritual food that Christians are to seek has not. Jesus told us what this food is: "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34). Reading the Bible is not the food; scripture is only the recipe for the food, which is the work of loving God with everything and loving our neighbors in the ways that Jesus told us. The ingredients include: being holy, not coveting, turning the other cheek, forgiving carte blanche, confessing Jesus, seeking the last place, serving the "least of these," and losing our lives to find them. His recipes for life must be made and eaten daily and are the only "figgy pudding" that will produce both temporal and eternal Christmas joy.

"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)

Gift Returns

The real value of a gift lies in its future use; otherwise, it was just a waste. This can't be more true and more warned about for God's gift of salvation. There can be much rejoicing when the gift is opened, but it will mean nothing for eternity if the gift is shelved, closeted, or returned. And it will be considered a mockery if it's only brought out and put on in pretense. It's expected to be daily used, cleansed, hoped in, and worn out for God and others. It's the bread of life that keeps on giving, but also the unrelenting starter dough. The gift of Salvation described as a candle, oil lamp, talent, armor, coin, pearl, and yoke all require effort and sacrifice for their potential and value. The gift is a living covenant, not a present.

"To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey" (Matthew 25:15 NASB)

"The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents'" (Matthew 25:20 NASB)

"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master'" (Matthew 25:21 NASB)

Distractions

Jesus says there are two things that distract God's children to a fruitless life: entertainment (or dissipation) and the worries of life (or anxiety). Dissipation is the pursuit of any distraction from the worries of life, while the worries of life seek to secure the ability to be comfortably distracted. True contentment and security, though, are not from believing how God "has our backs," but how we are to be at Jesus' back learning from Him how to love God with everything and how to love our neighbors as ourselves. The only worthwhile distractions from our own worries of life are to pursue God's holiness in ourselves and express Jesus' righteousness for other's.

"And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mark 4:18-19 NASB)

Resolutions

The only resolutions that mean anything are to "Love God with all our HSMS" and to "love our neighbor as ourselves." They are the only resolutions for which God provides every situation, all strength, and all lasting effect, and where failure is constantly forgiven so that they can be restarted. Their specific instructions were taught and demonstrated by Jesus, and they are the only paths by which true faith in Him is displayed. They often do not enrich our outer lives (probably the opposite), but they daily deliver the bread of life and living water containing peace, purpose, and power into them. They are the only resolutions that will ensure an eternal legacy both for ourselves and for our neighbors who God has intentionally given us.

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

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2 NASB)

"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (John 4:36 NASB)

Daily Grind

Christians go back to the daily grind of their lives, yet the necessity of a daily grind to advance God's kingdom has been replaced with "faith-not-works," "God's my sugar daddy," "don't try so hard," "let go and let God," and "I'm not perfect just forgiven." Decades (centuries?) of selected, weighted Bible verses have allowed "faith-not-works, just Jesus' work" to replace "faith is to work Jesus' works." A palatable and unobtrusive Christianity has little to do with Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements. We are saved to serve by following and obeying Him, and our daily grind must include the forgiveness of others, seeking the last place, supporting our neighbors, and confessing Him. Although our old nature will despise His ways, our spirit, soul, and body will find them not burdensome but restful.

"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)

"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done'" (Luke 17:10 NASB)

Fuddy-Duddy

Being holy for God is equated with fuddy-duddy, curmudgeon, boring, loss of fun and pleasure, and being holier- than- thou. And that's (almost) absolutely true! But replacing "do not love the world" and "die to self" is the insane roller coaster, epic battlefield, never- ending- adventure, hope- and- glory- life of "loving God with all your HSMS" and "loving your neighbor as yourself." Replacing "the lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life" is the healing of and provision for the flesh, eyes to see what Jesus is doing in us, around us, and all over the world, and a boastful pride of knowing Jesus, the creator of all things. Any loss resulting from holiness is replaced by the yoke of fellowship with Jesus as His righteousness lives through us.

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place." (2 Corinthians 2:14 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)

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7 NASB)

Diet Resolutions

Resolutions to diet and follow Jesus are analogous. Both recognize that the old ways lead to death. Both bring internal and external benefits. Both require 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. They require forgiveness (not acceptance) and refocus through everyday planning and action (repentance). Not hanging out in the kitchen (or fridge) or watching food shows or commercials is analogous to the holiness of not loving (embracing) the world and replacing it with Jesus' teachings and commandments. And the efforts needed to have and make the right foods is analogous to the righteousness of Jesus through us that forgives others, shows mercy, and bears other's burdens.

"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)

"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)

Jesus Faith

For by grace we have been saved through faith, but faith in what? Faith to 1) believe Jesus to live out His teachings of true life, 2) to accept only His propitiation for sin, or 3) to accept a church's statement of faith? The first is life emptying, the second is way easier, and the third is almost completely benign. The first will always bear fruit and keep us on His path to eternal life, the second may have potential to find the first, and the third may or may not lead to either. Saving faith is accepting Jesus' propitiation *in order* to follow His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments, and we have it by God's grace. Stand- alone, soothing Bible verses and church doctrines aren't incantations for immortality, but faith to live the way Jesus said to is eternal.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46 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"

"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 14:23-24 NASB)

Preservation

A Christian's preservation is maintained through their perseverance to follow Jesus. But why is that so hard? They can have His forgiveness to keep following His ways (just ask). They have the Holy Spirit to teach, lead, and empower them. And they have all God's eternal promises and temporal provisions. The hard part is wanting to follow Him. Most do not want to forgive others, to not covet this world, to seek the last place, to bear other's burdens, to turn the other cheek, to confess Jesus in the face of hate, or to become a servant or even slave to His righteous ways. Thus, church teachings are constantly found to make easier paths. But start again daily, hear what He taught, do the small things, pull while yoked with Him, fish with Him, and plant with Him by faith rather than by sight.

"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)

"For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"

"You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;" (Hebrews 12:3-4 NASB)

Perfection 2

Christians scoff at the pursuit of following Jesus perfectly for the wrong reasons. Perfection includes intentionally hiding good deeds done for Jesus, seeking the last place in all facets of life, humbling oneself in all situations, not coveting the things of this world, turning the other cheek when hurt, becoming servants even slaves, forgiving no matter what, dying daily to self, confessing Him in a world that hates Him, embracing humiliation, loving those who don't love you, and losing one's life to gain it in Jesus. In becoming perfect for Jesus, scoffing at the arrogance of it must be replaced with scoffing at the repulsion to live it out. After that, one can choose to obey Him and then fellowship with Him in the work.

"We are fools for Christ's sake,…To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 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 4:10a-13 NASB)

Team Jesus

Salvation is given in order to be on the team that prepares for and fights until the end, not set on the sidelines and cheer, or stay home and claim victory through association, or either enjoy or worry about life thinking that none of it matters, anyways. Jesus told us we needed to prepare, He told us the specifics on how to prepare (through His commandments), and warned us, repeatedly, about not being prepared. A Sinner's Prayer with repentance gets us on the team but the Coach's (Jesus') drills must be practiced daily. Although the regiments are hard and the life is hard, the peace is incomprehensible, the joys are complete, and the actual time to train and play will be like no time at all.

"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:3 NASB)

"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:4 NASB)

"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son" (Revelation 21:7 NASB)

Arguments

Christians don't have to "win" any arguments. They don't have to prove creation happened, prove that God's word is inerrant, prove that other religions or worldviews are wrong, or prove that their denomination is the only one preaching truth. Everyone, however, is called to "testify" of Jesus in their lives by confessing Him, living out His good works to the world, and witnessing of how Jesus' teachings and commandments have changed their lives. Christian testimony, by His words and deeds, is Jesus' *body* of proof to the world. In Jesus' parable, the Sower threw the precious seed everywhere, being both blind to the spiritual conditions of others and unconcerned that its future growth was up to him.

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15 NASB)

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:25 NASB)

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34 NASB)

Fear-Love-Fear

"Perfect love casts out all fear." Although God's love for us is perfect and He therefore has no fear of us, our love for Him is, well, not as perfect as Jesus' perfect love was for Him. People experience worldly fear because self-pursuits in a dark world is…fearful. The fear of God, however, acts either like a handrail on a precipice during the mental-emotional white outs that arise from temptations or trials, or as a steppingstone from the prodigal's pig pen back onto Jesus' narrow path of life. The fear of God is a necessary ingredient in perfecting our love for Him, and it's the only thing that will keep us safe and away from fulfilling Jesus' numerous warnings, such as:

"I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS" (Matthew 7:23b NASB)

"Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents" (Matthew 25:28 NASB)

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones'" (Matthew 25:41a NASB)

"the master…will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers" (Luke 12:46 NASB)

"He who overcomes…I will not erase his name from the book of life" (Revelation 3:5a NASB)

"So because you are lukewarm…I will spit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:16 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)

Suffering

After Jesus healed a man who had been sick for 38 years, He told Him, "*Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you"* (John 5:14). The Jews then persecuted Jesus because He'd healed him on the sabbath. This small passage shows that suffering occurs either because of unrighteousness (sin) in our lives or because of God's righteousness expressed through our lives. Jesus did both on the cross: He obeyed His Father Who then, *"made Him who knew no sin to be sin"* for us and to suffer to the point of death. Likewise, Christian's are called to both turn aside from a life of sin, which can result in weakness, sickness, or death, and to then fellowship with Jesus in suffering by following His teachings and commandments.

"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)

"For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30 NASB)

"but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:13 NASB)

Burdensome

"…and His commandments are not burdensome." So, is it "burdensome" to me that Jesus says I must forgive others to have my own sins forgiven? I must determine if it is burdensome to not forgive, or to "will" myself to forgive, or to actually forgive others. From experience, not forgiving allows roots of bitterness to saturate and strangle my physical, mental, and emotional health. That's a burden. "Willing" myself to forgive, to some degree, means recognizing my own sin, turning the other cheek, humbling myself, dying to self, and placing my life in Jesus' hands. That's a burden. At least to my flesh, which, coincidently, must always be put to death to fight the good fight, to be filled with His Spirit, and to be yoked with Jesus. But sharing His "joy made complete," His "peace that surpasses comprehension," and His "rest for my soul," however, is not a burden.

"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)

Lukewarm

"I am rich in the grace of God, and I have become wealthy as His child and heir." "I need nothing but to rest in the finished work of Jesus on the cross." *"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). *"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)

"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)

Podoselective

Did Jesus wash the feet of any Pharisee, prostitute, Zealot, Roman Soldier, leper, or Samaritan? No, but only those He called, "*having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end"* (John 13:1b). Jesus didn't teach hate, but that the world would hate Him because, *"everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed"* and *"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you"* (John 3:20, 15:18 NASB). Therefore, amongst the global Christo phobia, the church has been called to not fear them but to love their enemies, to not judge, to not condemn, to confess Jesus, to freely give, and to take up their own cross to do so. Trying to befriend the world and trying to love the world for Jesus are not the same.

"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18 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)

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (John 15:19 NASB)

Selection Day

What do Superbowl day, Darwin Day, Valentines Day, and the End Days have in common? They all involve a selective process. The End Days, however, are the "ultimate combine" to select out Christians who respond to Jesus' *unconditional* love on the cross according to all His *conditional* teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Jesus and the His NT writers alerted the church, *ad nauseum,* to train and practice for this final event. These warnings, however, have been ignored, dismissed, or replaced, *ad nauseum,* by traditions, precepts, and platitudes. At this point, each Christian must learn to convert the doctrinal "saved by faith" into a "living faith" that expresses Jesus' teachings on how to be holy, forgive others, show mercy, seek the last place, bear other's burdens, give freely, confess Jesus, lose one's life to gain it, and endure to the end.

"and behold, a great multitude which no one could count…standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes" (Revelation 7:9 NASB)

"These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" (Revelation 7:13 NASB)

"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14 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" (Rev 12:11 NASB)

Thrive

When Paul says that we are saved by "faith not works," he's talking about the initial "born again" event. No one "earned" their way into the womb to be born physically, and no one born spiritually does either. Once born, however, the work begins in learning how to live, working to live, and helping others to live, either physically or spiritually. Likewise, Paul talking about "faith" is not referring to a passive faith in the doctrine of "faith not works" to save us, but a working faith in Jesus on how He said we are to live, to live out His works, and to help others live. Mere doctrinal faith is a "failure to thrive" or a "still birth" and Jesus warned us to constantly check for that in our physical and spiritual lives.

"But He said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about…My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work'" (John 4:32, 34 NASB)

My Words

Since Jesus is God and since we are saved by faith in Jesus, Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments have precedence and preeminence in Scripture. They are to be taken literally and applicably for our own lives in every situation. They show us how to live, think, feel, and fear. They will always be about loving God and our neighbor more than ourselves, and about losing our lives rather than gaining them, yet they will be the source of our provision, strength, and hope. Wisdom can be asked for any of His teachings, and what's not understood can be met with our humility and need for mercy. Personal faith in the written word apart from the preeminence of Jesus' Living Word will eventually result in all His unbelieved warnings and judgments becoming, well, believable.

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine…," "My words will not pass away," "Everyone who is ashamed of Me and My words…," "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you…," "The words I say to you I do not speak on My own Initiative…," "He who does not love Me does not keep My words…," "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you…," "If you continue in My word…," "Because My word has no place in you," "It is because you cannot hear My word," "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day"

Brokenness

The modern church has been deceived into changing "God's *mercy for* our sin through the cross" for "God's *inclusivity despite* our sin through the cross." While mercy for sin drives *"putting to death the deeds of the body"* into a life of Jesus' holiness and good works, inclusivity despite sin negates a changed life by enabling and entitlement, all while praising God for being "made free" to do so. Holiness and righteousness are made metaphorical; specific NT sins are no longer mentioned and denounced; most "love of the world" is considered benign; and the mental, physical, and emotional damage resulting from sin has been redefined as "brokenness," complete with the entitlement of "victimhood." Brokenness from sin and becoming broken by losing one's life to follow Jesus' ways are not the same.

"And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust" (Matthew 21:44 NASB)

Free Indeed

Suffering for Jesus includes a willingness to suffer through the personalized trials and temptations that come our way, even while forgiving others, showing mercy, considering others more important, and confessing Jesus. Doing so is to *fall* on "the Rock" of Jesus to be *"broken to pieces"* so that He will restore us into His image. It means to *build* on "the Rock" of all Jesus' SOM teachings so that we will be ready for the storms that would otherwise sweep us away, spiritually. Only in keeping His specific teachings on *how* to live can we become free regardless of the roadblocks and sufferings of this life. Suffering *for* Jesus is to suffer *with* Him, to know Him, to fellowship with Him, and to eventually be glorified with Him.

"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32 NASB)

"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10 NASB)

"and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him" (Romans 8:17 NASB)

God's Law

God's law given through Moses still applies to the world and represents the complete way of living. Jesus said every letter of it is vital and anyone who says otherwise will be called least in His kingdom or not enter it at all. Jesus didn't rebuke the Pharisees for keeping the law, but for abusing it to their own gain and dismissal of others. If a person lived out God's law perfectly in both spirit and practice, they wouldn't look anything like a religious Pharisee, but they would look exactly like Jesus. Christians, however, are not called to live by God's law like outsiders, but to live by Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements like children in a house. That is a life of faith in Jesus and grace from God. Those not seeking or willing to do so are still outsiders, who are still under the law.

"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)

"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mathew 5:20 NASB)

God First

In our pursuit of true life to love God with everything and love one's neighbor as ourselves, loving God and His holy and righteous ways must come first. Otherwise, we will love our neighbors to please them rather than God, seek their approval rather than God's, or seek the world's approval because we fear it. Loving God first will also activate some level of dislike or even hatred among unbelievers, *"For everyone who does evil hates the Light"* and true followers are the *"smell of death" "to those who are perishing."* Loving God will always make us appear "holier than thou" because He *is* holy and will make us appear "*self*-righteous" because they don't understand "*Jesus'*-righteousness" living through us. Throughout the Bible and history, people always want the good works *from* God, but without the accountability *to* Him.

"Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?'" (John 10:32 NASB)

"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:12-13 NASB)

Entitlement

Since the beginning, God has "enabled" people who sin against Him by providing all good things for them to live, but He has never "entitled" them to their sin, and for that He is hated. People, however, have entitled themselves "as gods," according to their own desires for right and wrong. Like God, Christians are to help enable people to live through deeds of love and self-sacrifice but are not to entitle themselves or anyone else to sin. They are to testify that God's entitlement of real life comes only through repenting of sin and following His Son. Christians are to *"Vindicate the weak and fatherless, Do justice to the afflicted and destitute, and Rescue the weak and needy"* while not showing partiality to the wicked and delivering the afflicted out of their hands. Otherwise:

"They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, 'You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High.' Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like any one of the princes" (Psalm 82:5-7 NASB)

In Christ

Although Christians do not "convict" people of their sin, the doctrines and precepts of the modern church work hard to smooth over, distract, or negate any Holy Spirit conviction of sin in the hearts of church goers. Teachings such as, "God loves you just the way you are," and isolated verses such as, *"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"* (Romans 8:1) make it easy to ignore Jesus' plethora of warnings such as *"do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you"* (John 5:14b) or *"fear the One who, after He has killed, has the authority to cast into hell"* (Luke 12:5b). Being *"IN Christ Jesus"* by adhering to church teachings or by adhering to Jesus' teachings are not the same.

"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" (Matthew 7:21 NASB)

Covenant

The New Testament is a testimony, witness, attestation, proof, evidence, or demonstration and, the New Covenant is a compact, bargain, arrangement, bond, deal, or contract. The greatest deception is that both the testament and the covenant become one-sided. For example, the importance of, "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us* (His proof)*, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* (His covenant)" (Romans 5:8), has certainly surpassed the importance of, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit* (our proof)*, He prunes it* (our covenant) *so that it may bear more fruit."* (John 15:2). His life was given for us to give ours.

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned." (John 15:6 NASB)

Unconditional Love

God's love is not "unconditional." God's love is sacrificial, selfless, charitable, humbling, emptying, all giving, purging, and costly. His love comes with the condition that we accept it and then use it to learn how to love Him and our neighbors in the same way. Teaching God's love as unconditional removes all the conditions that His Son and Apostles detailed throughout the New Testament. His conditions are not about living under the law, but about learning how to live His true Life. Apart from that life, there is no life at all, only darkness, wailing, and death.

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

God's Law/Cross

God gave Moses His Law on immorality that included adultery, incest, bestiality, and other things. He also warned that nations doing those things will actually cause the land to become defiled so as to "spew out" its inhabitants. Likewise, Jesus reiterated that not one letter of God's Law will be nullified until all is accomplished. He also said that adultery occurs in the heart when looking at a woman in lust or from divorce and remarriage. Although no one can undo any type of immorality, it can now be simply confessed as sin and forgiven through Jesus' blood that came from sacrificing Himself on a cross. From this, God's law can be fulfilled so that anyone can have His peace, purpose, and power by which to navigate themselves and others through the inevitable "spewing" of the land.

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8 NASB)
If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." (1 John 1:10 NASB)

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9 NASB)

Pudding

Although God enables all people to sin for a defined time, He does not entitle them to it. Rather, He lets us decide our entitlement, either as a slave of sin or as a slave of righteousness. A slave of righteousness begins and ends their true life by acknowledgment, repentance, and a continual desire to be renewed from sin. Spiritual rebirth and the indwelling Holy Spirit replace the enslavement to sin and enable a life of "*good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"* (Eph 2:10). At Jesus' judgment seat, each person will have already proved their future entitlement; each according to how they believed His teachings and commands to forgive, show mercy, seek the last place, take care of the least of these, and confess Him to others.

"... 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 5:28-29 NASB)

"So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12 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)

No Perfect Church

There is no perfect church. Expressed biblically, that means there will be Judases, Annanias and Saphirases, *"those who walk but"* are or will become enemies, wolves in sheep's clothing, false prophets, tares among the wheat, goats, bad fish, those sick or dying because of sin, the immoral, those holding to a form of godliness, and the many to whom Jesus will say, *"I never knew you..."* This doesn't even cover Jesus' church warnings in Revelation of removing lamp stands, immorality causing great tribulation, beds of pestilence, being hurt by the second death, erasing names, and spewing from His mouth. Although not perfect, church is still a great place to confess our contributing sins, express our hope of deliverance, and remind each other of Jesus' specific teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments.

"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,"

"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."

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent." (Revelation 3:17-19 NASB)

Quantity-Quality

It's useless to argue about "types" of immorality when God's law includes all types under the same judgments. As Jesus' immorality definition is inclusive for sex outside of marriage, looking in lust, and remarriage following divorce, the sheer volume of it throughout the modern church and the nations is staggering. As He also warned that not one stroke of God's law and its judgments are negated until all is finished, the church and world seem primed for their judgments of the End Times. God's purpose in this, however, is to save a repentant, forgiven (Rev 7, 12) *"great multitude which no one could count"* who "did not love their life, even when faced with death" and "who keep the commandments of God."

"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will." (Mark 13:19 NASB)

"Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebews 13:4 NASB)

Rapture (or Pretrib)

Good luck with that pre-trib rapture thing. Then there won't be any need to OVERCOME in order to *"eat of the tree of life,"* to *"not be hurt by the second death,"* to be given hidden manna and a white stone with a new name, to be given *"authority over the nations"* and the *"morning star,"* and to be clothed in white garments and not have your name erased but, instead, have your name confessed before God and His angles. Although the condition that we suffer with Jesus in order to be glorified with Him (Romans 8:17c) was long ago dropped from church teaching, He is still *saying,*

"YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN" "...so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:26, 27b 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)

"for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29 NASB)

(See Jesus' SOM instructions for how to be an overcomer)

Living Water

Although Jesus said, *"Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me"* (Luke 7:23), His teaching that God considers divorce and remarriage to be adultery could certainly be offensive. Yet, the Samaritan woman at the well with five previous marriages was not offended but, instead, introduced the Savior of the World to her city. Sin is always the thing that hampers, erodes, and finally destroys life. But forgiven sin allows God's blessings, His Son's ways, and His peace, purpose, and power to make life thrive. Jesus' ways to forgive, serve others, and lay down our lives continues us along His narrow path. He is the well of living water that provides constant temporal relief for life's thirsts as we seek to eat the food that He ate for eternal life.

"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 4:14 NASB)

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work." (John 4:34b NASB)

Statements of Faith

We must stop basing our Christian lives on a church's "Statement of Faith," and start basing it on Jesus' teachings of what He will consider to be real faith. Jesus' mother had the best one-line "statement" from earth, saying, *"Whatever He says to you, do it"* Jesus' Father had the best one- line "statement" from heaven, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well- pleased; listen to Him!"* Our belief in Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments will be the standard of measure at His judgment seat. Church statements provide only general theology, while Jesus' words provide the theology that will decide both temporal and eternal life.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom 10:17 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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:1b-2a NASB)

Filthy Rags

"Our good works are like filthy garments, and we only need to rest in Jesus' finished work on the cross!" NOT. Jesus' finished work was to be a perpetual source of sacrificial blood for the forgiveness of our sins, not to replace our willingness and necessity to become like Him in His righteousness. His work was finished in His earthly body so that it could then be expressed through ours. His good works lived through us are certainly not filthy - unless we are using them as cover for unholy lives, which we must then repent of and fight for. We are, *"created in Christ Jesus FOR GOOD WORKS."* Him working through us and us working with Him is His idea of a "personal relationship."

"'for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.' It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (Revelation 19:7-8 NASB)

Overcomer

All Christians are called to be "overcomers," but not by hoping for Jesus to stabilize their lives, but by a willingness to destabilize their lives in order to follow and serve Him with however little strength and opportunity He provides. The modern church, in contrast, has become a spiritual industry of, "take this cup (of suffering) from me." But Jesus is still calling all, with whatever they have been given, to take the cup as He did, serve God and other's as He did, die to self continuously as He did, and die to this world as He did. Overcoming, picking up one's cross for Jesus, losing one's life to find it, and enduring to the end are the Christian life and its purpose. We are not saved so that Jesus can supplement our lives but for us to supplement His.

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour" (John 12:27 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)

False Love

Jesus' Great Commission, *"that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations"* (Luke 24:47a) has been changed by the church into, "believe in God's love through His Son and your sins will be forgiven." Specific sins, like adultery, are never mentioned but rather made into a metaphorical entity that, by default, is constantly forgiven by Jesus' blood. As for repentance, when we are overwhelmed by His love and grace, we will just naturally cease from the metaphorical sin and become, metaphorically, like Jesus (and if not, because nobody's-perfect-just-forgiven, that's ok). This redirection, however, is not saving faith, but a false, palatable theology that makes it much easier to be a Christian and makes the church much more likable.

"Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you."

"For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." (Acts 8:22-23 NASB)

Not the Same

Theology based on the whole Bible is not the same as theology based on the New Testament. And theology based on Paul's letters is not the same as theology based on Jesus' words. And believing in Jesus' words is not the same as believing Jesus in order to live out His literal teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Belief for eternal life must be based on *"My words," "My words shall not pass away," "these words of Mine," "if My words…," "He has explained Him," "the Living Word," "He is the same…," "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of…," "the author and perfecter of faith,"* and *"This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"* Saving faith, productive faith, protective faith, and eternal faith is believing Jesus first, the Apostles second, and applying God's law and the Old Testament as a preface.

"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)

"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 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)

True Love

One of the worst church teachings is that God's love is unconditional; it's not unconditional but sacrificial. Unconditional love negates the idea of God's judgment of both believers and non-believers, and it negates the condition that we return sacrificial love to God. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, seek to be a servant, if not a slave, of His righteousness to the world, and to lose our lives for Jesus in order to gain them. Our pursuit of sacrificial love is the condition of our saving faith: It's sacrificial to love our enemies, forgive those who have hurt us, turn the other cheek, confess Jesus in the face of hate, provide time and resources to those in need, desire mercy rather than judgment, and seek the last place in this life's pursuits.

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which 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 5:28-29 NASB)

Useful Hypocrisy

Peter's second sermon in Jerusalem was rich in that he told the listeners to repent of "disowning" Jesus, their Messiah, the very thing he had done three times. He also admitted that they acted in ignorance, although his own actions were certainly not. Jesus had instructed Peter about this sin, however, that it was designed to make his faith fail, permanently, and that it was even necessary for Jesus to pray it wouldn't. Jesus told Peter he would need to recognize his sin, repent, turn back, and then get to work. His instruction DID NOT include, "don't beat yourself up, you're forgiven," or "I will always love you, no matter what," or "when God sees you, He sees me." If these latter precepts are what sooths our own willful sin, then our faith has indeed failed and become something else.

"And he [Peter] went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62 NASB).

"Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting." (Psalm 126:5 NASB)

Church Glasses

Although the NT is saturated with the need for and the purpose of suffering, the modern church says, "we don't know why God allows it." The church doesn't know because it reads the NT with "church-colored glasses" that comfort them with having accepted "church-doctrine" and with a mindset of "already-saved." These glasses replace specific, literal NT teachings with "I believe the Bible," "I'm saved and going to heaven," and "the church says, 'that's enough.'" Responses to the NT are therefore, "oh, I like that passage," "sure, I believe that," "hey, there's my life verse!" Or, alternatively, "that's for unbelievers," "that's for the theologians," "I'll be raptured by then," and "God loves me just the way I am." Unfortunately, endurance through suffering as a proof of our faith will be a thing, whether we know it or not.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

"Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;"

"for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth."

"But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:33-36 NASB)

Jesus Doctrine

Over 40,000 denominations are divided mainly by "Bible doctrines," but none of these divisions include arguments about Jesus' doctrines; His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. Churches aren't splitting because one group wants to better forgive in order to be forgiven, or become more childlike, to better seek the last place in life, or to be better at turning the other cheek, or to be better peacemakers, or to bear each other's burdens better. And there are no (at least recent) splits to become better repenters from the adultery of lust, love of the world, covetousness, or boastful pride of life. The Bible will never cause division when Jesus' doctrines are used first to divide our soul and spirit, joint and marrow. Rather, it's God's enemy who uses "Bible doctrines" to keep us from Jesus' doctrines on His narrow path of life.

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

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

What's the Point?

A pre, mid, or post-trib rapture is not the point. Being ready to endure as Jesus said to is the point. God's grace is not the point. His grace to live like His Son is the point. Not being under the law is not the point. Walking in the good works that God has prepared for us is the point. Memorizing more of the written word is not the point. Following and living out what the Living Word told us to do is the point. And having God supplement our lives is not the point. Supplementing the life and body of Jesus, even unto death, is the point.

"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)

Think

The modern church teaches that belief in Jesus will bring His forgiveness of all sin and that life will then change because we know His love for us. In contrast, Jesus taught the opposite: that repentance for the forgiveness of sins was actually the beginning of belief and life in Him. Anyone can **think** they believe in Jesus without repentance or accountability to God; anyone can **think** they believe in Jesus only to continue their lives without seeking His narrow path of inward holiness and outward righteousness to others; anyone can **think** they believe in Jesus without loving God with everything and without loving one's neighbor as themselves; and anyone can **think** they believe in Jesus without losing their life for Him in order to gain it or without picking up their own cross to follow Him.

"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

"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." (Mathew 7:19, 21 NASB)

Humility-Repentance Month

If there is a June "pride" month for the world, then there should certainly be a humility and repentance month for Christians. Both God's law and Jesus' definition of heterosexual adultery as looking in lust, extramarital sex, and remarriage has saturated both the world and the church. God said that the land, itself, would eventually spew out such inhabitants (Lev 18), and the most frequent warning to Christians is about immorality. All sin CAN be forgiven, but the gospel is "REPENTANCE for forgiveness of sins" through Jesus, rather than just that "belief in Jesus takes care of all sin." The act of "Putting to death the deeds of the flesh" is what separates God's true children from the illegitimates, thistles, tares, goats, bad fish, sons of perdition, the "I'm too busy's," and the "I never knew you's."

"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." (Revelation 2:22 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)

PFARM

In the June Humility-Repentance Month, acronyms of the world are unimportant for Christians seeking the kingdom of God. True Christians, however, should establish an acronym to be reminded of God's severe warnings about immorality. His law is fearfully explicit on adultery and fornication and Jesus included our hearts and minds by stating that adultery is also looking in lust or remarriage after divorce. Jesus makes it possible to repent and be cleansed of any immorality, but we must have the humility to want and need it. Thus, one acronym for humility and repentance might consist of Pornography, Fornication, Adultery, and ReMarriage: PFARM. Like the Prodigal Son, Christians are called to rescue people from the pig farms of immorality, not to continue living in them.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3 NASB)

"I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced" (2 Corinthians 12:21 NASB)

Mercy-Judgment

In the June Humility-Repentance Month, most people will look at God's law and think He's unjust to tell the Israelites that any immoral person (e.g. adultery and fornication) should be stoned to death. But they don't see that He also warns that the very land will eventually spew out its inhabitants when immorality (e.g. adultery and fornication) saturates it (Lev 18). They don't see that, throughout the Old Testament, God did not call His people to keep stoning, but to just repent before the inevitable spewing starts. They don't see that, similarly, Jesus warned it would be comparatively better for us to lose an appendage and be lame for life than to keep on sinning. And finally they don't see the plethora of other NT warnings and judgments to Christians about continuing in immorality.

"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4 NASB)

"For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10 NASB)

Lust of the Eye

In the June Humility-Repentance month, we must remember that "saving faith" in Jesus includes believing His warnings to Christians. Concerning the lust of the eye, *"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out…If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off..; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell"* (Mat 5:28-30). Thus, being born again will not remove the body's desire to sin. Severing desire depends on what we "will" ourselves, daily, to look at, and all forms of media are saturated in lust. Continuously looking and acting on Jesus' life and His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments is the only safe place to be in order to fulfill the heart and life rather than the flesh and death.

"*The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 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 6:22-23 NASB).*

Sin

In the June humility-repentance month of Christian immorality, big churches boast of scripture to understand and deal with sin but don't seem to follow any scripture. Jesus, however, said that stumbling blocks are inevitable (Luke 17:1-4), that we are never to say we are without sin (1 John 1:8-10), and that only the Trinity can be considered as "good" (Mark 10:18). We are to repent of our sins, confess our sins to each other (James 5:16), and know that God's forgiveness of our sin requires that we extend forgiveness to those who have sinned against us (Mat 6:14-15, 18:35). We should expect that God, if we are truly His children, will also discipline us for sin (John 5:14, Heb 12:1-13), and, like Paul, we should discipline our own bodies to fight against sin (I Cor 9:27). Unlike the sin-excusing platitude, "not perfect, just forgiven," we are forgiven to *pursue* perfection to become the small version of Jesus that He's planned for each of us.

"For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ," (Philippians 3:18 NASB)

"whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." (Philippians 3:19 NASB)

Temptation

In the June Humility Month, holiness is abstinence from immorality. We are, however, not called to fight temptation, but to fight the innate desire within us to be tempted in the first place. In a diet, for instance, no one fights temptation by standing in front of an open refrigerator. They don't day dream about restaurants and they look away from media that glamorizes food. They aren't tempting themselves and then fighting it off, but they are subjugating their root desire to be tempted (food holiness). They then work hard to plan and prepare healthy foods (food righteousness). In the same way, a Christian must not fight the world's sensuality and immorality presented by its media but crush their desire to be tempted by it in the first place. The desire of our flesh must then be replaced by the desire of our spirit to follow Jesus' teachings on how to build God's kingdom both in and around us.

"Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9b NASB)

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13a NASB)

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, 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 12:1 NASB)

June Bride

In the June Humility-Repentance month, a marriage (or remarriage) is the first place to learn how to live out Jesus' teachings and commandments in order to imitate His love for us. Forgiving carte blanch, considering others more important, not letting the sun go down…, bearing each other's burdens, humbling one's self, seeking the last place, and losing one's life to gain it all contribute to each other's spiritual sanctification and to the building of God's kingdom inside and outside the home. God has sanctioned marriage in the flesh, but the spirit of each person is first a (moral, holy) child of His who is there to support the other child of His (even in the seemingly most insufficient ways) during this short life. It's not "charity begins at home," but "Jesus Who begins at home" and His expectations are way more specific and difficult.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," (Ephesians 5:25-26 NASB)

"for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church," (Ephesians 5:29 NASB)

Self Identity

In the June Humility-Repentance Month of Christian immorality, there is no place more real and fulfilling to change one's self-identity than in repenting of sin and following Jesus. From the heart (rather than the flesh), we are called (commanded, expected) to change into a child, into a bride in preparation, into a servant even slave of others, and then into a soldier and warrior of all those traits. Although the modern church teaches that Christian identity is mostly metaphorical, Jesus teaches and warns that it had better be practical, and that through these things we will receive His promises, blessings, and fellowship. All Christians are called to daily fight the good fight to become transensual, transworldly, and transtemporal in order to transition into Jesus' righteousness of love to their Heavenly Father and their neighbors.

"and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

"Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer." (2 Cor 5:15-16 NASB)

Social Justice

In the June Humility-Repentance Month, Christians should know that both humanity and much of the church has become its own god, defining right and wrong, rather than following the ways of a creator God Who provides everything for their temporary lives. Social justice demands either self-indulgence or exclusion if against it, while Jesus expects self-denying love from the heart according to His teachings and commandments. In social justice, self-identify can be in anything except the truth of Jesus as the Living Word, while eternal identity from God comes only through losing one's life to find it along Jesus' narrow path of life. Social justice defines love through one's genitalia, while the Holy Spirit empowers love for God and one's neighbor when the flesh and self are denied.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2 NASB)

"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)

Roman Road

Roman Road theology without Jesus' theology gives us the church we have today. Roman Road theology requiring Jesus' theology was the early church that endured 300 years of persecution. Roman Road theology gives us the specifications of salvation, while Jesus' theology gives us its owner's manual. The former without the latter doesn't do much; faith in the specs doesn't often equal faith to follow Jesus. In addition, the former often produces only knowledge, while the latter always produces love.

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

AI Pastor

AI could conceivably develop sermons that teach true Christianity way more than the modern church. An AI allowed to learn only from Jesus' words in the gospels and the first three chapters of Revelation would likely present a Christianity devoid of modern church precepts, traditions, and doctrines of demons. It would also likely present Christianity, not according to just "anything in the Bible," but according to *"the Author and Perfector of faith,"* the only begotten of God Who *"has explained Him," "the word of Christ"* by which *"faith comes from hearing,"* and the *"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"* But, of course, it would still take a receiving heart to either believe and follow Jesus, or be a name-only Christian who ignores, distorts, or discounts Him.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them…" (Mat 7:24a NASB)

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them…" (Mat 7:26a NASB)

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

"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)

"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;" (John 8:31b 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)

Discipline

We can't pay for our sins, but we can sure be disciplined by them. The sweetness of sin sows to the flesh which then reaps its bitter attributes of either being shaken by or in shaking up family, friends, and neighbors. The bitterness will make us fear or hate the world, and emotional, mental, and even physical health can be affected. Sin will cause creation to work against us and make material possessions crumble in front of us. While one can dismiss these things as random, what is not random is the ability to navigate them more smoothly or even pass by them unnoticed depending on the strength of one's walk in the Holy Spirit. Discipline is a sign of Jesus' love, and of being a legitimate child of God.

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

"But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." (Hebrews 12:8 NASB)

"For they [earthly fathers] *disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness." (Hebrews 12:10 NASB)*

Sight of Faith

We are saved "by faith not works," yet Jesus says that true saving faith is faith to do the works that He teaches and commands. It takes faith in Jesus to forgive, carte blanch, those who have hurt you. It takes faith in Jesus to be slapped (physically or verbally) and turn the other cheek. It takes faith in Jesus to give the poor widow's mite (rather than out of excess). It takes faith in Jesus to humble oneself as a child and seek the last place. It takes faith in Jesus to become a servant, even slave, of others for His kingdom. And it takes faith in Jesus to lose one's life for Him in order to find it. This type of faith brings light and sight, in contrast to blind faith, which just believes that God's got your back for the way you want your own life to go.

"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?" (James 2:14 NASB)

"You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;" (James 2:22 NASB)

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

Law of Faith

God's law (through Moses) is perfect and always required true faith to live it out (however imperfectly). God continuously promised the Israelites that faith to do the law (however imperfectly) would produce a deep and protective relationship with Him (which occurred throughout OT), but the use of sacrifices to disregard the law was an abomination to Him. Jesus rebuked those who disregarded, twisted, negated, or used the law for their own purposes. And now true faith has been rerouted to believe Jesus by following His teachings and commandments that fulfill the law (however imperfectly). Jesus, however, is still rebuking those without that faith who disregard, twist, negate, or use His teachings and commandment for their own purposes. His final letter in Revelation concerns the churches' use of His sacrifice to replace the life He commanded with the precepts of unconditional forgiveness and misplaced grace.

"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 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." (Rev 3:18 NASB)

Humiliation

Ego thrives on the humiliation of and indignation for others as it serves to temporarily validate its existence. In Christianity, it is often said that real humility only occurs through humiliation of self or circumstance. While God certainly does use humiliation to break down the pride of one's heart in order to find their need of Him and true life in Him, the NT is very clear that we can also choose to "humble ourselves" and "cloth ourselves" with humility throughout life. Humiliation is necessary, but the choice of humility against our own pride or the pride of others is always more preferable and gentle. The only validation of "self" that any person will keep for eternity is the "loss of self" that they embraced in seeking the most humble and humiliated man in history, Whose name is above all names, Jesus.

"But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation" (James 1:9-10a NASB)

"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial [and its humiliation]*; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12 NASB)*

"and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (1 Peter 5:5b NASB)

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5:6 NASB)

Believe Him

If He warns it may be possible that He could tell me to depart, or never knew me, or will not forgive my sins, or not show me mercy, or that I built on sand rather than the rock – I believe Him. If He says that I could be an unprudent, rejected virgin, a wicked/lazy slave, or a goat rather than a sheep – I believe Him. If He says that I must bear fruit in keeping with repentance, that He may not confess me before His Father, or will judge me as I have judged others – I believe Him. The modern church, in contrast, wants to be unaccountable to God and likeable to congregants and therefore cherry picks warm fuzzy NT verses to say – "they believe Him." Jesus, however, cares that we are with Him for eternity. Read Him again, literally, and follow Him to perfection no matter how imperfectly.

"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: 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)

Exercise

Resolutions to exercise or repentance to follow Jesus are analogous. Both start by acknowledging that inactivity contributes to a poor quality of life and possibly premature death. Once pursued, however, both bring internal and external blessings. Both require a lifetime of perseverance in daily focus and effort. Both come with the dangers of distractions and comforts leading to apathy and lethargy. Although the times of apathy and lethargy are inherent, distractions and comforts can be combated with new daily resolutions or repentance. Both pursuits eventually end in physical death, but our efforts in exercise take care of our temporary vessel given by God for the efforts of following Jesus to glorify God and then share in His glory.

"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 Corinthians 9:24 NASB)

"but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27 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 Corinthians 9:25 NASB)

Mockery

"God is not mocked!" Christians must remember that the whole world unites to hate and mock God regardless of their flavor of immorality. God says when the land becomes saturated with generic immorality, it will *"spew out"* those who live there. At this point, the church is way past the *"If my people will pray…"* to save their skins and more at the dire need to prepare for, *"Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."* At this point, Christians must wake up to learn that the wheat and tares are separated by those who are willing to use the "free gift" to pursue the "costs everything" life (Matthew 13:36-50). Jesus provides the "spiritual prepper" details in His Sermon on the Mount. God actually IS not mocked by current events because every person will reap what they sow, and it's for each person to learn how to sow Jesus.

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

Bravery

Some say that Christianity will perish without more bravery. The modern church, however, can't embrace bravery as they ignore, dismiss, and negate Jesus' teachings such as, *"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 does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."* (Matthew 10:37-39). Modern church doctrines and precepts tell people they're eternally safe and secure, and that they don't need Jesus' highly conditional teachings and commandments on how to live out His sacrificial love for God and the world. Believing Jesus literally *is* brave Christianity and those believers will be in His kingdom, forever.

"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son." (Revelation 21:7)

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8)

Spiritual Psychosis

Christians must make sense of and respond to this seemingly psychotic world by knowing it is, *"in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."* (Ephesians 2:2-3). Jesus called His enemy, *"the ruler of this world"* and Satan also said, *"I will give You all this* [world's kingdoms] *and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish"* (Luke 4:6). Although, *"The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 4:4a), Jesus is still calling us to His mission mercy before His final act of judgment.

"to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Act 26:18 NASB)

What is Sin?

Although some churches no longer refer to sin as sin, most churches still preach on sin but refer to it as some kind of spiritual baggage that Jesus removes rather than as the specific sins mentioned throughout the New Testament. There are over 15 lists of specific sins (see below) with warning that practicing them instead of striving to repent from them will result in a spiritual status of still-birth or of not inheriting the kingdom of heaven. The lists are not the law but come from the law. They are not salvation but the lost thorns and thistles that accompany it. They are not a new law but their loss is indicative of a new life. They are not just generic brand immorality or pride, but specific acts of adultery and specific character traits that come from pride. Without their recognition, one can't fight the good fight against them or know to repent so as to remake straight paths away from them.

(Mat 15:18-20), (Mar 7:20-23), (Rev 21:8), (Rev 22:15), (Rom 1:18-32), (1Co 5:5-13), (1Co 6:9-11), (Eph 4:31), (Col 3:5-9), (Tit 3:3), (Gal 5:19-21), (Eph 5:3-7), (1Ti 1:8-11), (2Ti 3:1-5), (1Jn 2:15-17), (2Pe 2:1-22), (Jud 1:1-25)

Good Deeds

Christians don't desire to do Jesus' teachings on good deeds to get saved or stay saved but because of who they have become: a small version of Him. They desire His good deeds because He said to do them. They desire His good deeds because He warned that not doing them is an indicator of not being in Him. They desire His good deeds because they are the spiritual yoke with Him that brings rest for their souls. They desire His good deeds because, even though their flesh hates them, they are actually not a burden but life fulfilling. They desire His good deeds because they bring His narrow path of humility, loss of self, and sanctification for eternal life. And they desire His good deeds because they bring fellowship with Him in His sufferings that is followed by His eternal rest and His eternal glory.

"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)

"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)

"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14 NASB)

"and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24 NASB)

Hope in Suffering

What if many pastors and ministry leaders don't understand much about hope in Christian suffering or infer that it's not relevant to God's plan or His desire for our lives? What if there were, however, a few hints in the New Testament and brief examples include: *"for I will show him how much he must suffer for..." (Acts 9:16); "but whoever loses his life for My sake will…" (Mat 16:25b); "But if you are without discipline,… then you are…" (Heb 12:8a); "and the sanctification without which no one will…" (Heb 12:14b); "who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to..." (2 Cor 1:4a); "indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not…" (2 Cor 1:9); "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may…" (Rom 8:17b); and "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us…" (2 Cor 4:17a)*

The Pursuit of…

The Creator has not given people the right to preserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; He has given them physical life to pursuit Jesus in order to find their life, liberty, and happiness. And all of life is a proving ground for that. In addition to breath and body, He provides food, clothing, and shelter for our physical needs, and family, friends, and even pets for our mental/emotional needs. The only way for these things to be healed and to have their intended full potential is to believe in and live out Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments. We must daily consume and expend His teachings and ways as if they were life, itself - because they are.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6 NASB)

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63 NASB)

True Surrender

Modern Christianity centers on God's love for the world and individuals. Surrender to His love will enable Him to forgive us, comfort us, and take care of us in any circumstance to eventually bring us safely into His kingdom. Unfortunately, surrendering to God's love and surrendering to His will are not the same. Surrendering to God's love is just saying, "take care of me" while surrendering to His will is to follow His Son's teachings, commandments, and examples on how WE are to love God and our neighbor, how WE are to lose our lives to gain them, and how WE are to pursue His life in order to share in His eternal life. Saving faith is not trusting God for our lives, it's trusting Jesus to follow His way of life.

"Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.' (John 6:26 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)

Gold

What's the difference between gold, silver, and precious stone vs. wood, hay, and stubble that a Christian uses to build their spiritual lives? On one hand, there's going to church and learning the Bible and praying and waiting on God and small groups and VBS and promoting the right side of politics to keep the country God-centered. There's also watching Christian friendly movies, potlucks, and various community outreaches. On the other hand, however, there's following Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments to forgive carte blanch, turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, give the poor widow's mite, seek the last place, not call anyone stupid, love those who don't love you, and take care of the "least of these." His teachings and commandments are not about how to have a comfortable life, but about how to carry a cross and lose one's life in order to gain it.

"each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work." (1 Cor 3:13 NASB)

"If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward." (1 Cor 3:14 NASB)

False Inclusive Love

Inclusive love only works by the exclusive conditions of those promoting it. It is a tribal love based only on one's flavor of orgasm, cultural values, or stereotyped skin color and it is always hostile to God's sacrificial ways to eternal love and glory. The importance of tolerance, honor, respect, and value applies only to those who narcissistically love themselves or love others who think likewise. It is a religion whose god equals themselves. It is devoid of any wrongdoing and accountability except to its own fluid value system of convenience. It denies its ancestry to the billions of murders, rapes, thefts, oppressions, wars, and genocides of all history and is not responsible for the current sea of despair pervading the earth. It is the epidemy of, "eat, drink, get high, and have sex - for tomorrow we live forever."

"For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4 NASB)

"just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." (Jude 1:7 NASB)

Judgment

Christians must pray for the families and friends who have lost people in the recent school shooting. They must pray for the Lord to heal and give hope during this horrible time. But they are also called to pray for the shooter and his father; for them to find Jesus, repent, and be forgiven of their sins and to have a life of hope and purpose in glorifying God. This is what Jesus came for: to rescue those enslaved by Satan since birth, those raised to embrace the darkness of this world's ways, those who are enemies of God and His Son, those who have borne the continuous fruit of untold malice and harm on themselves and others, and those who don't believe they do any of that and, even if they did, they just don't care. Because heaven will be full of these kinds of repentant, forgiven people – people who will be just like us.

"so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45 NASB)

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48 NASB)

True Inclusive Love

The world's inclusive love is not love because it doesn't contain the peace, purpose, and power that come from Jesus' definition of inclusive love to "love your enemies," "pray for those who persecute you," "turn the other cheek," "walk the extra mile," "rejoice in persecution," seek the last place, "lose your life to find it," and the fellowship of His suffering to share in His eternal glory. The world's concept of inclusivity is only a justification for varied sin with which to have self-love, self-indulgence, and hostility towards God. In contrast, true love is sacrificial love that first comes from God in order to be returned to Him by loving one's neighbor, loving those who don't love us, and by loving God with everything we have.

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

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

"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 Corinthians 4:18 NASB)

Don't Squeeze the Jesus

The modern church condemns "blow horn Jesus," "sanctimonious Jesus," "overbearing Jesus," and "judgmental Jesus" but affirms "best bud Jesus," "huggy Jesus," "I feel you Jesus," and "He's got my back Jesus." But you'll seldom, if ever, hear them say and revere Him as, "The Name above all names," "The One whom the earth will mourn over," "the One to whom every knee shall bow," "The Righteous Judge," or "The Author and Perfector of our Faith." These names don't fit with the made-up Jesus of the modern church such as "heaven's doormat for our sins Jesus," "follow me around and clean my messes Jesus," "make my life better Jesus," and "everyone gets a prize Jesus." They have cherry picked away all verses that say He will judge each person according to their works and decide each person's eternity based on a saving faith that followed His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments.

"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit." (Matthew 7:17 NASB)

"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)

One Path of Life

What if *"teaching them to obey all that I commanded you"* was as equally important as *"you must be born again,"* and the faith to pursue a life of obedience was going to be the indicator of actually having been born again? What if most of the healing for and the peace, purpose and power of life actually occurred through faith to be obedient? What if most of life's problems were from not walking Jesus' narrow path of obedience, and those problems were meant to push you on (and keep you on) that path rather than be delivered from them? What if the world was sucking the life out of you but the real solution was to willingly expend your life for the world by following Jesus' teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgements? But wouldn't it be great if those red-letter words were the key to the most perfect, fulfilled life that would be kept forever?

"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)

"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)

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24 NASB)

"The (Real) Way"

How is it that Christians will be judged by God if they are saved? Because Jesus lays out those judgements throughout His teachings and persistently warns His disciples to pay attention to stay on His narrow path. These warnings and judgments are part of our "saving faith" that keep us following Jesus as "The Way" of eternal life. Satan, however, has deceived the church into ignoring Jesus' warnings and judgments by highlighting any other verses of promise without Jesus' accompanying conditions. Experiment yourself by reading His Sermon on the Mount literally. God has given us a covenant of sacrificial love from Him to us and us back to Him to demonstrate that we are His children, rather than the no-fault unconditional love the church has come to embrace. Jesus, throughout His teachings, details the good works that express a sacrificial love from us.

"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20 NASB)

"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." (Matthew 7:21 NASB)

Spew the Pew

Why is the only "good thing" that an evangelical Christian can do is lead someone to Christ? Why are Jesus' teachings of "The good Samaritan," "honoring your parents," "giving in secret," "caring for the least of these," "seeking the last place," "forgiving to be forgiven," "loving those who don't love you," being holy and forsaking immorality from fear of God, and dozens of other ways to love God and one's neighbor are negated? Why is His teaching not important that *"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"* (Mat 23:15b)? Why have the last 2000 years of churches been clearly deceived but the modern church is not? Why is it that Jesus will spew the Laodicean church from His mouth because of their lukewarmness toward living out the good deeds He taught and expects?

"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)

Wine Press

Who's teaching that the *"wine press of the wrath of God"* is coming to the whole world for its immorality and that Jesus will be the One treading it (Rev 19:15)/ and that true saints will be proven by their ability in persevering to *"keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus"* (Rev 14:6-20)? Who's teaching that God's commandments are only kept by the self-denying faith it takes to live out Jesus' (red-letter) teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments? Who's teaching that the ability to persevere only comes through current preparation to both hear Jesus' words and live by them? Who's teaching that the practice of hearing and living will keep one on the rock throughout God's wrath/ while the practice of hearing but not living will place one on the sand to be swept away by it? Who's teaching that we don't persevere by believing God's got our back, but by staying in back of Jesus to follow His ways?

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!"' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.'" (Revelation 14:13 NASB)

God's Housekeeping

[Sarcasm] It's great to see prominent Pastors exposed for immorality. The rest of the ministry leaders always see it as a calling to examine themselves and confess their own immorality which God's law and Jesus defined as looking in lust (**P**orn), **F**ornication, **A**dultery, and **R**e**M**arriage (after divorce) (PFARM). [Still sarcasm] It also goads the church to corporately confesses its immorality and come together to repent and strive against the world's darkness that is always on their TVs and cell phones. [Still…] They recognize and renounce all the ways of deception to love the world and live for themselves rather than for Jesus' ways and His kingdom. They know these things promote immorality and idolatry and that the wine press of God's wrath is coming soon to the whole world, and that they must be ready to endure according to Jesus' narrow path of self-sacrificing love.

[Not sarcasm]
"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." (Matthew 7:21 NASB)

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" (Matthew 7:22 NASB)

[Still not…]
"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" (Matthew 7:23 NASB)

Goads

Modern Christianity says that guilt, shame, and fear are practically sin for Christians who have been forgiven, saved, and under God's grace. In Jesus' Christianity, however, guilt, shame, and fear are either guardrails that keep one on His narrow path of life or steppingstones to get one back on it. While the modern church says they inhibit our fellowship with God, Jesus says that they are used to keep His fellowship by warning that we are looking away or have wandered away from Him. In this dark world, people use guilt, shame, and fear to cause humiliation and brokenness in others or themselves, but their created purpose is to bring healing, strength, and peace by following people less and Jesus' ways more. Guilt, shame, and fear are God's short-term goads for us to follow His Son's teachings and commandments to keep us in His peace, purpose, and power.

"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)

"I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us." (2 Corinthians 7:9 NASB)

Conflict

The Christian life is not about avoiding conflict to keep the peace, but engaging in conflict to have, offer, and point to the peace that only comes from Jesus. We do not engage in conflict for money, possessions, or life-style maintenance but for the salvation, commandments, and ways of Jesus. Jesus always left a wake of conflict, not because of food and miracles, but because He claimed that His teachings and authority are the only light in a dark world. Food, miracles, and provisions are certainly required for loving one's neighbor, but they must always bring the conflict of loving God with everything by pointing to His Son through the holy and righteous ways that He has commanded for His true children. No matter how conflictual, His path is the only one that will bear fruit and bring His peace and safety, both now and for eternity.

"For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;" (Matthew 10:35 NASB)

"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." (Matthew 10:37 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)

Christianity

Jesus commands His true followers to love those who do not love them and to give (with finances and time) to those who cannot repay them. He teaches God's true children to seek the last place in society and to confess Him to others. He says that those who are truly saved do not seek to gain their lives by finances, comfort, insurance, entertainment, or even health but to lay them down in love for God by faith to follow Jesus' ways of bearing other's burdens, being holy at whatever cost, forgiving those who hurt them, giving to those who would take from them, desiring mercy over judgment, and becoming like children, like innocent doves that are wise as serpents, like servants even slaves, like a grain of wheat that must die to bear fruit, like fruit bearing branches, and as distributers of His goodness, as a light in the surrounding darkness, and as His very body that is still present on earth.

"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)

Christian National

It's said that Christians should learn how to use a gun or hide behind someone who has. In the same way, Jesus' disciples pulled out their swords before His arrest and death. God, however, says that Christians are to love their enemies because they were once His enemies. God says that Christians are to lay down their lives for that love because Jesus laid down His life for them. God says that the weapons of this love are confessing Jesus and keeping His ways of holiness and righteousness, forgiving others, showing mercy, providing for any need, turning the other cheek, and loving Him more than life, itself. God says that these are the hallmarks, signatures, and seals of His true children. God says that the only eternal defense is to follow His Son's eternal offense.

"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'" (Matthew 16:24-25 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)

"Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me" (Luke 7:23 NASB)

Love Hurts

While 1 Cor 13 describes the character of love that distinguishes a Christian heart, Jesus' teachings and commandments define its actions. Thus, the "character" of love will "turn the other cheek," "go another mile," "extend mercy to receive it," "be a peacemaker," "conceal good works," "seek the last place," "confess Jesus (to hostility)" "seek Jesus' perfection," "become a servant and slave," "love its enemies," "greet those who don't greet them," "not pull out tares," "not judge or condemn," "give a widow's mite," "care for Lazarus at the Rich Man's gate," and "seek to lose its life to gain it." Although this love will certainly bring "rest for the soul," "joy made complete," and a "peace that surpasses understanding," its cost will be to "*bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things." (1Co 13:7)*

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:26-28 NASB)

Spiritual Politics

Reject the Christian teachings of those who equate the values of politicians with the values of the kingdom of Heaven. The values of political parties have little or nothing to do with God's will on earth and they are a distraction, red herring, decoy, and trap against listening to and obeying Jesus who told us how to think, live, and be. Regardless of the platform, politics is the highest venue for the "angle of light" to lure people into the world's (and his') ideas of "righteousness." God, however, will use whichever platform He chooses to bring His judgment to the church and the world as they ignore His patience for them to repent by following His Son. In fact, just bypass all Christian teachers (including these memes) and go to the original source, Jesus, for true saving faith. We must follow, literally and with difficultly, His self-emptying and self-sacrificing teachings, commands, warnings, and judgments. Then, let our witness be, "I am so and so, and I approve of JESUS' message."

"No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14 NASB)

"Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." (2 Corinthians 11:15 NASB)

"Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death." (2 Corinthians 11:23 NASB)

Jesus is King

The phrase, "No matter who is president, Jesus is still king" barely scratches the surface of Jesus and His kingdom. Rather, "no matter who is the world's president, king, dictator, tyrant, imperialist, sadist, megalomaniac, or psychopath in charge, Jesus is still king. No matter how much unemployment, poverty, hatred, starvation, greed, murder, lying, self-justification, anarchy, lawlessness, infanticide, and genocide in a society, Jesus is still king. The world has seen no end to evil rulers and evil citizens since its beginning and it's promised to continue until Jesus, The King, returns. Hope for the right leader is only hope for the "love of the world" (1 John 2:15-17) and the desire to gain one's life rather than lose it by following Jesus (Luke 9:24). Only in following Jesus can the sufferings (whether inward or outward) of this world have a purpose that brings eternal glory to God and to the one suffering. Longsuffering is implicit in God's continual sacrificial love for His rebellious creation and it is implicit in the sacrificial love He expects of those who believe His Son.

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it" (Romans 8:20 NASB)

"and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." (Romans 8:17 NASB)

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18 NASB)

The Real Platform

[Speculation] Given the state of Christianity, it would seem likely that the Beast of the End Times will be an adherent, if not a supporting member, of the modern church. Any unrepentant greedy, covetous, slandering, immoral, and world-embracing celebrity who gives the slightest head-nod to the church is completely embraced as an advocate and hero. The church can't see this falseness because it doesn't care about what Jesus said on who will and who will not enter His kingdom, and only uses Jesus as a heavenly doormat for sin or as a maid to keep life tidy and secure. A failure to take Jesus literally in all His teachings, commandments, warnings, and judgments has created a church that only embraces a form of self-help godliness with no fruit or perseverance (2 Tim 3:1-7). This is a perfect platform for the Beast and his prophet to extend their abominations during God's judgments to the church and the world just prior to His Son's return.

See Jesus' letters in Revelation 1-3 for expected deeds, failed deeds, and imminent warnings prior to the End Times

INDEX

Bitterness
Forgiveness, Forgiveness 2, Mental Health, Burdensome, Discipline

Children
Become Like Children, Meekness, Christmas Child, Self Identity, Discipline

Church
No Perfect Church, Jesus Doctrine, Roman Road, Believe Him, Gold, God's Housekeeping, Christianity, Bland, The Real Platform

Companionship, Fellowship
Aliens and Strangers, Perfection 2, Suffering, Free Indeed, June Bride, Goads

Confessing Jesus, Confessing Sin
My Witnesses, Idiot!, Daily Grind, Preservation, Perfection 2, Arguments, God's Law/Cross, Rapture/Pretrib, Sin, God's Housekeeping

Devil, Satan
Dark World, Entitlement, Social Justice, Spiritual Psychosis, Reformation, Enemies, Judgment

Disciples
The Great Omission, Become Like Children, Knowing God, Perfection, Discipleship, Prudent Oil, Church Theology, Ears to Hear, Quips, Christmas Child, Not the Same, Jesus Doctrine, Sin, Self Identity, AI Pastor, Believe Him, Love Hurts

Enabling
The Least of These, Entitlement, Pudding

End Times
Aliens and Strangers, RockSand, Prudent Oil, Prepper, Become Ready, Spiritual Prepper, The Righteous Judge, Selection Day, Quantity-Quality, Rapture, Hope in Suffering, Wine Press, The Real Platform

Enemies, us or them
Enemies, Spiritual Prepper, The First Stone, Social Justice, Spiritual Psychosis, Judgment, RockSand, Prepper, Tare Not, No Perfect Church, Posdoselective, True Inclusive Love, Christian National

Eternal Security
Preservation, Believe Him, Saving Faith, The Living Word, Daily Grind, Jesus Faith, Statements of Faith, Not the Same, Bravery, Good Deeds, The (Real) Way

Evangelize
My Witnesses, Halloween 1, Arguments, Proselytes, Stand at the Door, The Great Omission

Faith
Reformation, Disclosure, Spiritual Cherry Picking, Peace on Earth, Jesus Faith, Thrive, God's Law, True Love, Sight of Faith, Law of Faith, Believe Him, True Surrender

False Prophets
Prophecy, Tare Not, Vessels not Mirrors, Quips, Epic Fail, Daily Grind, Entitlement, In Christ, True Love, Jesus Doctrine, False Inclusive Love, Don't Squeeze the Jesus, Proselytes, Spiritual Politics

Fear
Fear-Love-Fear, Humility-Repentance Month, Goads, Podoselective, God First, In Christ, Discipline, Don't Squeeze the Jesus

Forgiveness
Forgiveness, Saving Faith, Forgiveness 2, Mental Health, Burdensome

God's Law
God's Law, God First, Law of Faith, Rumors of War, Spiritual Cherry Picking, Unconditional Love, Quantity-Quality, Humility-Repentance Month, Mercy-Judgment, What is Sin?

Good Works, Good Deeds
Stand at the Door, Knowing God, My Witnesses, Thoughts and Prayers, Prudent Oil, Idiot!, Rumors of Wars, Black Friday, Figgy Pudding, Thrive, Filthy Rags, Sight of Faith, Good Deeds, Christianity, Bland

Grace, Hyper-grace
Stand at the Door, Perfection, Saving Faith, Spiritual Cherry Picking, Gift Returns, Lukewarm, In Christ, Unconditional Love, Filthy Rags, False Love, Discipline, Law of Faith, Don't Squeeze the Jesus

Health
Forgiveness 2, Why God, Why?, Peace on Earth, Distractions, Fuddy-Duddy, Diet Resolutions, Suffering, Brokenness, Discipline, Exercise, The Pursuit of…, Goads

Holiness
#Holiness #Righteousness, Vessels not Mirrors, Distractions, Fuddy-Duddy, Diet Resolutions, Brokenness, God First, Lust of the Eye

Immorality
God's Law/Cross, Quantity-Quality, PFARM, Mercy-Judgment, Temptation, Mockery, God's Housekeeping

Jesus
My Words, Statements of Faith, Not the Same, Roman Road, AI Pastor, Don't Squeeze the Jesus, Jesus is King

Judging Others
Judge Not, etc., Become Like Children, Idiot!, The First Stone, No Perfect Church, Excuses, Believe Him

Judgment, Glorification and Condemnation
Gold, Judge Not, etc., The Great Omission, Meekness, The Least of These 2, Vessels not Mirrors, Become Ready, Forgiveness 2, The Righteous Judge, Excuses, Gift Returns, Selection Day, God's Law/Cross, Pudding, Quantity-Quality, Statements of Faith, Mockery, The (Real) Way

Knowledge
Knowing God, The Living Word, Become Ready, Prophecy, Disclosure, Jesus Doctrine, Roman Road

Love, true and false
Podoselective, Brokenness, Unconditional Love, False Love, True Love, June Bride, True Surrender, False Inclusive Love, True Inclusive Love, Love Hurts

Mental Health
Forgiveness 2, Why God, Why?, Mental Health, Distractions, Resolutions, Fear-Love-Fear, Burdensome, Spiritual Psychosis

Ministry, Lights, Priests
Forgiveness 2, Halloween 1, Mental Health, Beatitudes, Jesus Families, Black Friday, Self Identity, True Inclusive Love, Judgment, Christianity, Bland

Perfection
Perfection, Become Like Children, Perfection 2, Sin, Tribulation, Judge Not…, Epic Fail, Excuses, Fear-Love-Fear

Persecution
God First, Hope in Suffering, Conflict, Prophecy, True Inclusive Love

Perseverance
Team Jesus, Free Indeed, Rapture, Overcomer, Church Glasses, Temptation, Humiliation, Hope in Suffering, Wine Press

Politics
Dark World, Entitlement, Social Justice, Spiritual Psychosis, False Inclusive Love, True Inclusive Love, Christian National, Spiritual Politics, Jesus is King

Poor, Least of These, Needy
The Least of These, The Least of These 2, Black Friday, Christmas Child, Gold, The Love of Money

Pride
Humiliation, Become Like Children, Tribulation, Fuddy-Duddy, What is Sin?, Humililty-Repentance Month

Provision
The Love of Money, Preservation, Pursuit of…, The Least of These, Entitlement, RockSand, Prepper, Living Water, Overcomer

Purpose
Tribulation, Halloween 2, Get Saved, Beatitudes, Jesus Families, Figgy Pudding, Resolutions, Overcomer, What's the Point?, Sight of Faith, Hope in Suffering, Pursuit of…, Jesus is King

Repentance
Useful Hypocrisy, Think, Humility-Repentance Month, PFARM, Mercy-Judgment, Exercise, God's Housekeeping, Goads

Rest, true and false
Knowing God, Daily Grind, Lukewarm, Living Water, Filthy Rags, Pursuit of…, Good Deeds

Righteousness
The Least of These 2, Thoughts and Prayers, #Holiness #Righteousness, Vessels not Mirrors, Black Friday, Pudding, June Bride, Good Deeds

Salvation
Stand at the Door, Saving Faith, Heroes of Faith, Get Saved, Spirit-Flesh, Spiritual Cherry Picking, Epic Fail, Gift Returns, Jesus Faith, Think, True Surrender

Sin
Jesus Theology, Rumors of Wars, Excuses, Fear-Love-Fear, Suffering, Brokenness, Entitlement, In Christ, Living Water, False Love, Useful Hypocrisy, PFARM, Lust of the Eye, What is Sin?

Spiritual Warfare
Enemies, Spiritual Prepper, Team Jesus, Temptation, Social Justice, Mockery, What is Sin?, False Inclusive Love, True Inclusive Love, Conflict, Christian National

Suffering, Tribulation
Tribulation, Aliens and Strangers, RockSand, Prepper, Why God, Why?, Halloween 2, Spiritual Prepper, Beatitudes, Team Jesus, Suffering, Free Indeed, Overcomer, What's the Point?, Humiliation, Bravery, Hope in Suffering, One Path of Life, Wine Press, Jesus is King, The Real Platform

The Great Commission
The Great Omission, Saving Faith, Get Saved, Bravery, Good Deeds, One Path of Life

Theology
Discipleship, Jesus Theology, The Living Word, Heroes of Faith, Reformation, Church Theology, Quips, Epic Fail, Jesus Faith, Covenant, Statements of Faith, Not the Same, Church Glasses, Roman Road, Spew the Pew, Proselytes

Warnings
Judge Not, etc., Tare Not, Heroes of Faith, Ears to Hear, The Righteous Judge, Excuses, Gift Returns, Selection Day, Thrive, Covenant, Church Glasses, Think, Humility-Repentance Month, Mercy-Judgment, Bravery, What is Sin?, The (Real) Way

Witness
My Witnesses, Halloween 1, Arguments, Spew the Pew, Proselytes

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Kirk McCrea lives in the Southeast Michigan area with his family, and is the author of *Hearing Jesus, Differences in Knowing and Living God's Word During Persecution and Suffering* and *The Survivor Church Kitchen.* He is a retired research scientist in epidemiology of infectious diseases and has almost 20 years of experience in various on-street ministries. More information, Jesus' summaries, and book downloads are at http://www.kingsbooktable.org/.

Back Cover

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 them all literally and seek to live them in every circumstance and nerve synapse of life. Faith to follow all Jesus said *is* saving faith. Only He can disciple us through all life's chaos and sufferings every minute of every day. He did His part in providing the blood for the cleansing of our sin, and He told us His expectations for our part: with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. His words are the quick-start and user guide of how to be a Christian, while the apostles provide specifications on why it works and supplements that extend His teachings (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 _____"* (99% of translations). If what He daily says to you seems impossible, you're on the "narrow gate and way of life" rather than the "wide gate and way of destruction."