

The Divine Conspiracy Lectures
Dallas Willard @ Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute



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The sessions were originally typed from the videos with good-faith effort. Some of them are verbatim thanks to the work of Dallas Willard Ministries. We are moving from typed to full transcription. The [brackets] & bold disclose the scribe's commentary and also possible cross-reference of these sessions with other Dallas Willard teachings.

~ 01 **Jesus & Culture** [YouTube link]

[1:13:02]

Some people find it a little odd that a philosophy professor should do all the things I do, in particular that I should be such an explicit advocate and follower of Jesus Christ. But that's because of a peculiar past that we have in our culture. The truth of the matter is when the Christian gospel came into the Graeco-Roman world, it was understood to be answering the questions that the philosophers were asking. Especially in the 2nd and 3rd century of Western history, the intellectuals converted in mass precisely because and they said because the gospel of Jesus Christ with the background of the people of Israel and the Old Testament answered the questions that at the point philosophers had been trying to answer for 500 years or so.

Today we live in a situation where the culture has more or less taken Jesus and put Him aside. You don't think of Jesus as being particularly intellectual or intelligent. You think he is nice but not smart. If you ask a group of unsuspecting people who is the smartest person in the world, they won't think of Christ.

When we come with the message of Christ into our world, we get re-categorized. One of the main things I want to do is to try to shift that back and see Jesus Christ in a different kind of way. [3:00]

Paul was the one who really came to understand the place of Christ in history.

Colossians 1:13 ff - *In Him. He delivered us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son. In Him, we have redemption the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created...by him and for him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. That he might have first place in everything.*

* The order of the chair you're seated on is Christ in action.

That is the picture that impressed the 1st Century. This is how the 1st Century body thought about Jesus. This is how we must think about Him today if we are to think about REALITY. It's all about "REALITY"!

Philippians 2:5-11

[7:00]

This mind that was in Christ Jesus was one that arose out of a community which we call the Trinity. The absolute stunning quality of love and trust in that community was that One who had it all could turn it all loose in confidence that He lost nothing.

He emptied himself. Took the form of a slave. Took the shape of human beings. The meaning of **the Cross** is the ultimate point of emptying out of one who was equal with God. Laying that down. Turning it loose in death on the cross.

—> **That Cross became the center point of the Divine Conspiracy.**

Someone asked me a few days ago, "Why did Jesus die on the cross?" So that Mel Gibson could make the movie! It is true, profoundly true. Jesus planned it and

brought it off. All through the ages that has stood that as a high point in human history - **The Cross.**

What is God doing to do it that way?

Who would have chosen to do it that way? No one.

That's for our benefit for that's where we are in union with God and union with Christ. We walk forward in what He's doing now as as we join Him on the cross.

The reality of Christ and the Cross in human history is what brings us into the flow of the single greatest force in human life which is the Cross.

Believing that totally flips everything else upside down. It affirms a Kingdom which is eternal and different from anything human.

Philippians 2:9 - *"Therefore God has highly exalted His name above every name. Every knee should bow, every tongue should confess."*

* When I was younger and a bit meaner than I am now, I use to believe this was a picture of Christ standing with His foot on the neck of every unbelieving person making them say, "You're Lord." I don't think that's the picture at all. I think the picture will be one of great relief. I think it will be people who have not accepted Him will thank God that He is who He is and the world is a reflection of that kind of God.

When we think of *The Divine Conspiracy*, we are thinking of the action of God in history. This is the description of the central personality of God in action in history and that is Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom - Jesus taught mainly about the Kingdom of God on the assumption that He and His Father and His Spirit were the King. [11:30]

The Kingdom was what Jesus mainly spoke about. That was His gospel. The Kingdom of God is a kind of life.

Matthew 13 - Parables of the Kingdom of the Heavens [12:15]

* v. 31 - Like a mustard seed - small, insignificant, meaningless, tiny

Christ dying on the cross - insignificant. That's the way the Kingdom is. The Kingdom from the human point of view looks like nothing. Small and insignificant.

* v. 33 - Yeast - like a virus [goes viral]. Hidden in a bushel. [13:20]

Leaven works quietly and keeps growing just like the mustard seed.

Originally intended the book to be titled "The Kingdom Among Us".

The Divine Conspiracy is God's plan and process of overcoming evil with good in human history. [15:45]

That is why the CROSS and the RESURRECTION

Knowledge

[16:15]

We need to talk about knowledge because that is what we bring - knowledge. That is the battle we are in when we bring the message of The Divine Conspiracy. If you don't understand what knowledge is, you won't know how you stand in the battle. The constant problem for human life is to find an adequate basis for life in knowledge. In other words, we need to know what we're doing. By in large we suffer from a lack of knowledge. Most of all from a lack of knowledge of God. What is God and what is God doing?

The story of human progress is the story of progressive knowledge.

We are use to it and we know more and more what to do.

- * Virus not humans are the head of the food chain. They want to eat us.
- * Terrorism exists today because the increase of knowledge.

~ **Knowledge is absolutely central. What we bring when we talk about Jesus Christ and what He is doing is the knowledge of reality.**

[Knowledge (def.)] ***"We know something when we are able to represent it as it is on an adequate basis of thought and experience."***

Not just true guesses but based in experience and thought. In the case of the teachings we bring as followers of Christ to the world, it involves the Bible, the Church, Church history and the community. Knowledge is a communal kind of thing. We come with the message of Christ, we come out of the context of the presence of the Bible, Church, history, the overarching presence of the Spirit and our best experience and thought ourselves as we go along.

~ **Knowledge involves Truth**

That's why it's so important. You can believe but not know. You can guess and be right

- * Guess on an investment and be correct and make \$

You can't guide life by what 'happens' to be true, by guessing, especially about God. Guessing - you don't know if it's true until it's all over. Guessing about God is extremely hazardous to your health. If you're wrong, you're in real trouble. We need knowledge not just truth. Truth enables us to deal with reality in a way that is good for us.

John 3:16 - Whoever believes in Him (puts their confidence in Him [22:15]

That's a big idea. Is there another religion where God gave His only son?

This is a watershed issue

Does God really love the world and did He act in the world that way? Is God really like that? If that is true, everything has changed. If that's true, I can trust God with everything. I don't have to run my life, fight with others for the bones of

life like two dogs in an alley. I can release my life into God's hands & trust Him. I can do what He says in confidence. It is a good thing not just something designed to make me miserable.

Why do people perish for lack of knowledge? [24:00]

If you lack knowledge, reality will run over you, desert you or leave you out.

If we act with knowledge & truth, our actions harmonize with reality otherwise not or just by chance. This is why is so important to get the right take on what God is doing, on there being a God, on the nature of the world we live in.

Three Background Stories in Our Culture Today [24:50]

1. Naturalism - Matter is all there is; Visible world is the only world.

In no area of competence is knowledge of God required (PhD exams)

Guiding philosophy of a major segment of our culture, mostly Universities

2. Nirvana - New Age; The World we see is an illusion; The real world is non differentiation where you & I are not distinct. We're actually the same.

3. Theism - Is generally pushed aside or treated as an odd cultural artifact

The ultimate reality is the God of Theism all powerful and all loving.

Whether we are right or wrong is the great question.

Christians talk as if there is an ultimate difference where you wind up

If you believe certain things, you will not be OK [meaning w/out God in Hell]

That sticks in the craw of many people in our culture today.

REALITY is totally unyielding to false belief. TRUTH is unforgiving. It does not change if you have certain opinions. No one has ever made a belief true by believing it. If we get it wrong, we're in trouble. REALITY is what you run into if you are wrong.

* Running out of gas even if you believe you have gas and you don't, run into reality by running out of gas

Truth frees you from bondage to reality you disagree with. If you are true in your reality, you will experience wonderful freedom. Truth of gas in your tank will facilitate your operation and you will not wind up in a disagreement with reality.

***The primary issue in The Divine Conspiracy is Truth -
...Is it truth or falsehood?***

* Tower of Babel - human efforts to succeed by human abilities [29:55]

We will be successful leaving God out

Today's Babel - Secular knowledge system of the Universities & Professions

Operates in the idea of **separation of church & state**

If it was assumed that the church had essential knowledge of life, without which human beings could live well or live at all, there would be no question of the **separation of church and state**. Separation of religion from political processes all predicated on the idea that religion had nothing to say about reality.

If you practiced a form of religion that would substantially transform the human situation, there would be no issue of separation of church and state any more than the separation of physics from state.

[[science & state, medicine & state, health insurance & state](#)].

[[See Rousseau's Social Contract about lack of religion in society.](#)]

* Transcendental Meditation had a round for a while to transform secular society but it was not effective.

[[His slip of the tongue - "Transcendental Medication"](#)]

Can it do what Jesus Christ can do?

Is there anything Jesus can do that others can't?

The greatest challenge facing the church today - do they have KNOWLEDGE that is essential to human life or is it just another wild faith project where you launch yourself into something and pretend you are being delivered?

~ **Human Limitations to Knowledge are Great** [33:40]

Can we achieve on our own the knowledge in order to live? No

The Bible is talking about this issue. Suppose the Bible contains the most important information about the most important issues in human life.

Suppose there is a God of love who actually speaks to human beings.

* Carl Sagan can tell me about the Cosmos. What am I going to do?

I need trust the information for what I will do - moral and vocational choices.

The Bible introduces you to a God who just might speak to you and give you guidance in your life by walking with you and talking with you and helping you.

Knowledge & Self-Will

Good thing we are limited in our knowledge because our **Self Will** is unlimited so it is good our human limitations.

"Evil comes from will beyond knowledge" (Descartes)

Knowledge is limited and it grows very slowly.

God allows knowledge to grow slowly that we have opportunity to grow morally

Knowledge brings power; power brings responsibility.

Moral growth has not kept up with our technological development.

We are dealing with people who don't care if you do destroy them

The great issue on the human stage - How will the civilization that is still basically Christian deal with a culture that has a totally different take on God, who they are and what they should do? Do we just bomb them into oblivion?

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Jesus is still working on the stage and the Divine Conspiracy continues to grow.
[* "Jesus popularity spread through all of Syria" (Matthew 4)]

Self will is set against TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE because truth and knowledge always limit what you can DESIRE. Our desires always exceed REALITY. [40:30]

* Credit Cards - We will what is not. Credit is one way to will what is not
[Cash = we spend what we know, what is truth, what we have]

Romans 1 - The most important part of social analysis in the whole Bible
v. 18 - *They turn away from God and suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

Comes out of the basic conflict between will & knowledge.

* **Acts 8:9-25** - Simon offered \$ to John & Peter to get the power.
He jumped to his death. His self will to fly was greater than knowledge

God looks at the human heart - the will. [42:30]

God is trying to perfect the will in human history. [Perfect as the Father]

God's intent for each of us is that we should become the kind of person whom He can empower to do whatever we want.**

The real issue - what kind of person am I?

Philippians 2 - God in Jesus turned it all loose.

He subjected himself to death on the cross. He showed a will, a character.
In our heart we decide what we are really about.

What will govern us - will it be God or will it be us?

Jesus abandoned his will. **Joyful, delight, power come together as God grows the human being in the kind of character of Jesus.**

Suppose a significant % of the human race had His character?

You can see life would be very different

That is the intention of the Divine Conspiracy**

God looks at the heart - [who] we really will be. What is going to govern us?
The central issue the surrendering the will abandoned to God delighted in Him and His will. As it grows it is perfectly safe for us to have knowledge & power. [45:30]

The current situation - God is not obvious because He is interested in the will.

God doesn't overwhelm you. God comes in ways that are gentle.

If God didn't hide from us, we couldn't hide from Him.

He's so big that if He didn't hide, we couldn't hide.

That is why there is a Divine Conspiracy. A conspiracy is something hidden.

He remains hidden and available to those who seek Him.

* **Matthew 13:13-17** - Why Jesus taught in parables [47:10]

Those who see, can not see. Those who hear, can not hear.

He who has ears, let him hear. We have ears for sorting & arranging things.

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The need to adjust what we take reality to be so that it will suit our will.

What Jesus is talking about those who have eyes not for seeing will not see what he is talking about. That is God's provision for the will that doesn't want Him. If you don't want Him, you don't have to have Him...at least not now.

This is fundamental to Jesus' way of teaching and to the Bible.

A Provision for the Human will

[49:20]

"God can not ravish, only woo. The creatures are to be one with Him, but yet themselves." CS Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, Letter 8

It is important for us to understand why God is not obvious. He could have been obvious. He is not obvious because of the need to allow human desire and will to go its way because that is what defines human character. God's intent for each of us is that we should grow to the point to where He can empower us to do what we want, but you immediately realize there is a lot of work to do on the "wanter" for Him to empower our wants. God calling forth the human will and allowing the human being to have an identity. God is present but in ways that anyone who wishes to deny can deny. [51:35]

* Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac - they are very different but not visible. You can see it if you want to but if you want to deny it, you can deny it.

How can people be in the presence of Jesus and deny him? People can choose to. Born in a manger, lives a simple life in the boondocks. He comes in as an outsider. *"Where did you get your authority?"* John the Baptist was an OT prophet who identified Jesus and that gave him a place to stand humanly speaking. Still, he was rejected.

"If the rulers of this world had understood the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified Him." (Paul in I Corinthians 2:8)

Would the rulers of the world crucified Him if they knew what Paul described in Colossians 1?

They almost didn't crucify Him. Jesus was silent because Pontius Pilate would have not crucified Him. Jesus was working the whole thing to His ends. Jesus was controlling the process. He was not a victim even though He looked like a victim.

Post Resurrection - I would have gone back to Pilate and said, "Can we have that discussion about truth and power one more time?"

I would have visited the Sanhedrin in session.

* Jesus confronting Peter as Satan - Two kingdoms of God & Man

Even after the resurrection, he was conspiring quietly.

"He became visible only to those chosen before hand." (Acts 10:41)

The conspiratorial nature of God in human history is there to allow human beings to make their choices, both individually and in groups, and in nations like an election. People will make a choice, The choice will be a manifestation of the character and will of the people. *"It's the economy, stupid!"* Is it really? Suppose

we make the choice on the basis of the economy? We make choices based on our character.

The **Church** itself can be looked at in all kinds of ways. We look at the church the past and make it out the way we want it to be.

Col. 3:1-3 - *"If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above not things on Earth. You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."* [End 58:24 = 9:00]

John 3 - Same lesson to Nicodemus. Like the wind, you can't see it
If you are set to interpret the hidden part in others ways, you can do that.
It's up to you. You don't have to accept the reality of Christ in the Church.
Your life is hid with Christ in God. God is present, but... [59:20]

The Divine Conspiracy - God's plan to overcome evil with good in the grinding processes of human nature. The Kingdom works that way.

You are tied into the reality of the Kingdom of God that is going to bring to pass that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God.

Isaiah 6 - The earth is filled with the glory of God but not the knowledge of the glory of God until the future. Isaiah is faced with God in the temple. "Here am I. Send me." The knowledge of God is painfully absent. The future is where the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

The Crucifixion is the center point of the revelation of the hidden **kingdom**.
Colossians 1:20 - *"Reconcile all things to Himself."* [1:00:50]

* Hollywood - What's this all about? Individuals & groups move toward the reconciliation of all things in Christ.

"If I be lifted up (the cross) I will draw all humankind to me."

One way or another they will all come to Him.

* Moses and the symbol of the serpent - Poisonous self will

If you don't know the **kingdom of God**, the human self will is all that is left.

The Cross is designed to help people see what self will does. What living as one's own king does. By looking at that, recognizing it and turning to God in Christ and giving up one's self will and saying I want to live in the invisible kingdom of God which is now available.

People of Christ bring in truth in a "Community of Crucifixion" [1:03:20]

Human beings really can't deal with truth on their own.

The truth will make you free is more aptly the truth will make you flee.

The truth human beings get apart from God will nearly always be destructive and it will be used for our purposes.

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I Timothy - The household of God - the church of the living God, the pillar and support of truth. The Church is the pillar and it supports the truth. Truth can only be endured and promoted in the community of grace where self-will does not rule but where love rules. That's why you want to understand Jesus did not say the Truth will make you free.

- * USC Philosophy Building Elevator, "*The Truth will make you free.*"
Apparently you don't have to believe it. It just happens.
- * Babel - Blind confidence in human research and problems will be solved.

"If you continue in my word (living in it), then you are my disciples indeed then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (**John 8:32**)

Confidence in Jesus and living with Him and being His disciple will enable you to know the truth and be set free.

The Issue of Social Authority - Who has knowledge (truth)? [1:06:40]

That is the issue underlying all the battles of our day - Who has knowledge!

The message of Christ through its institutions (church & schools) has been set aside as a basis of life, truth & knowledge.

The secular mind has redefined knowledge that it alone has it.

Christians often have conceded this. The single greatest terrible mistake is the willingness of the church to walk away from knowledge. The result is determining policy for life is left to the secular mind.

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead.

That is the pressure point of the work that we do today.

The basic idea in the first session is this - There is a Divine Conspiracy and it will win. It is a conspiracy because God must be hidden that humanity may take the alternatives that presents itself to SELF-WILL and CHARACTER grow out of that [decision].

* Raising CHILDREN - at a certain point allowing them to do what they want to learn wrong & right.

Character only develops with freedom. This is a profound spiritual truth about the meaning of human history and what God is doing in the cosmos.

There are a certain amount of dead hens you have to work through before you see what is good and what is right. That's true of individual life and corporate life.

When you look at the contemporary scene - business, military, pop culture, music - that's what's really going on. God is at work far beyond what we call the church. God is just as much involved in business, science, art, etc. I say that because of what I believe about the Kingdom of God and what God is doing.

The **Church** is not the Kingdom of God but a peculiar manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught that in the parables.

- * The parable of the wheat & the tares.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 1** ~ ~ ~

I. HUMAN NATURE - What is a Human Being?

This is the biggest battle in the contemporary scene

Is there human nature? The official response, "There is none."

The drive to total liberty developed into the 20th Century

The essential mark of the Babel orientation of human life

* School ground ? - Should people be able to do what they want?

Democracy - Exaltation of the human will; Everyone should be able to do what they want to do. That is a perversion of human nature.

This is only true if we don't have a Nature that limits what you can do

Everything that has a nature has limitation

* A podium isn't a toothpick

NATURE - Limits freedom of doing what you want to do

* Looks, talent, size, strength are part of "Nature"

Bad arguments of "Nature" such as Racism, Feminism (Biology is destiny)

"You are a woman, therefore you can not do..."

No Nature = No Limits

John Dewey rejected the idea of Human Nature

Natural Law can not be evoked as a basis for law.

Traditionally there is natural law. Legal laws should be based on laws of nature.

* Justice Kennedy - The basis for a Texas Sodomy decision was public sentiment. "What does the public like? Want to do?"

"Wait, that is wrong. There is 'natural law' or 'laws of God'."

We have moved to what is right by the public as the basis for law.

Nature can not be invoked to support Heterosexuality.

* Massachusetts law evoked public sentiment in support of gay marriage.

"What about Nazi public sentiment?" They would say, "No!"

But they have already abandoned Nature as a basis for law.

DESIRE - Denying Human Nature takes care of all the issues where DESIRE wants free play at one fell swoop and turns it into at most a social issue. You can be told you are wrong if you want what society does not desire. You can be controlled on the basis of that. Only because you have group desire. That is why political correctness becomes so important in our time.

"Desire" vs. "Good" - the underlying issue

That redefines the meaning of "love".

Desire can be for what is not Good. You can not define good in terms of Desire.

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If you define "Good" in terms of Desire, then automatically if you desire something, it is good. Most people can not push beyond that because they have desired things that are not good. One of the meanings of "regret".

Love desires good [09:15]

Now to love someone means that you will what is good for them. If you love someone you will what is good for them. That's the meaning of the word be-ne-vo-lence, benevolence, be-ne-vo-lence, will to good. OK?

Now, if I love you, that means sometimes I'm not going to will what you desire, because you sometimes desire what is not good. Do you see how that works? So we all know this again in the case of our families, that to love a child often means that we do not do what they want. Isn't that true?

Now frankly, to love me would mean that I would often not do what I want. Do I need to say that again? To love me would mean that I often would not do what I want.

So I might be the sort of person who would say, If I want to - if I have to die, let me drown in a chocolate milkshake. I might just adore chocolate milkshakes. That doesn't mean they're good for me. So self love would mean often that I not do what I desire to do and do what I do not desire to do.

So now this is tremendously important folks for understanding the kinds of things we deal with in trying to live for God and looking at what God says because what God says is what is good for us, not necessarily what we desire.

Self Simply Desires

But self will says, I want what I want when I want it. Or in the language of the Cole Porter musical that is now the rage - "Anything Goes". Right? Anything goes. As long as I want it. See, that's the poison of self will that corrupts the good in human life. I want what I want and again we...

One of the first things you have to teach a child is, it isn't always good to do what you want. You would like to hit Johnny over the head with the truck. That's not good, and you should not do it. You ought not do it and if you do it you are a bad boy. Right? See, those are rudimentary lessons that we have to keep in...

NATURE & WILL & DESIRE

Connections in things in reality independently of what we think or desire
Our salvation is to find what those are. We are not smart enough to do that.

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A God who speaks in love becomes central to the well being of human life

* Sexuality - God said certain things about sexuality but they do not conform with what people may want in the area of sexuality.

When you cut lose from the teachings God says about it, you say "Anything goes" as long as you have consenting adults.

You stepped into an area where there is a nature. You can choose an action but not the consequences. Results will be there.

* AIDS - Millions will die to a disease that is fundamentally tied to wrong sexuality and no one can say a word about that.

Human WILL and DESIRE has institutionalized in a culture that rejects TRUTH and goes with DESIRE.

But nothing lacks a nature - parts & properties * Squirrels or Brussel Sprouts

Whenever we step over the boundary of Nature, God goes first.

Because God is nature writ-large. He determines what nature is elsewhere.

[16:30]

Romans 1 - Where people cast aside God's nature. Profound analysis of the human situation. 1:23, "*Even though they knew God, they did not honor God.*"

When you start to deny the reality of God, everything comes loose.

It is now left to the human capacity to discern and act in the boundaries of reality.

* "Holy Cow" - How can a cow be holy? [Holy Crap!]

With the rejection of God, we loosened our mind from reality.

The MIND will be directed by the WILL and it will not function correctly.

The WILL is supposed to be directed by the MIND under TRUTH.

The human BODY is the first thing under the direction of the human WILL.

- Why Sex & Violence so prominent in a society that is directed by DESIRE.

When the MIND no longer governs the will by TRUTH, then the will turns to the BODY and says, "I will squeeze out of you all that good - what I DESIRE."

I John - "*Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride (dominance) of life*"

Turn from God, your BODY becomes god.

God first then degrading passions (**Romans 1:26**)

Natural progression to have good in what is desired.

Once you turn to DESIRE, you have no way to limit it. It is not self limiting.

If your life is built around DESIRE, you will never be satisfied

"*If there is no God, everything is permitted.*" Dostoevsky 19th Cent.

Institutions of Knowledge in 19th Century attacked God

Became more common place - the Arts picked it up.

If you are not rooted in the KNOWLEDGE of God, it will seem as there is no restriction on what you might do to fulfill DESIRE. Turn to the BODY to use it to gratify DESIRE. Men lose the capacity to discern Good & Evil. [23:30]

Ephesians - Read Paul as though he was a University Professor talking about social & psychological reality. Currently in the context of knowledge, "Sin" is not a category. It does not explain anything. We can't introduce evil or sin to explain.

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* Educators are farmers who don't believe in weeds or bugs. They believe in fertilizer. They can't deal with evil. It is not a category of explanation. Sin is not a category. For Paul, Calvin, Luther, sin was a category.

Ephesians 4:17 - "Gentiles" people without God who stand outside the covenant relationships with God. They are getting to know Him as His mystery is being revealed.

"The futility of the mind" - the MIND that doesn't get anywhere by thinking. They don't work. They have distorted reality in their premises. "Calloused" - Don't feel.

FEELINGS - We live in a sensual age. FEELINGS. We don't learn to "feel good".

That's why we are so addictive. "I gotta have the feeling." The only way out of addictions is to realize you have a will distinct from your feelings. You don't have to feel good. If you live for feelings, you will become callous. If you live for feelings, you will do whatever is required to get the feeling.

Read Paul as what he was. Paul was a brilliant analytical mind.

Once you get that callous MIND and you misunderstood your NATURE in such a way that you're only going for FEELING, then social institutions and arrangements will conform to that. [30:00]

Romans 1:28, "*not acknowledge God any longer*" - the linchpin. If you have God, then you have NATURE and a God who speaks tells you the TRUTH you need to know.

"God gave them over to a depraved mind" - a MIND that doesn't work.

Today's discourse - you listen to a MIND that doesn't work.

* We live in a politics of contempt - Imagine if we focused on helping people for what is good and what is right. If a candidate said, "*I believe the American people will make a choice. If they choose you, I am going to be rooting for you to succeed because I want the good for the country.*"

Fallen Humanity - When DESIRE and WILL does not square with TRUTH and REALITY, we see social institutions and arrangements adapt to that situation.

[31:45]

Romans 1 - God leaves you free. He lets you go if you want to.

When there is a restraint by the knowledge of God that is institutionalized [the Church] you see a knowledge that these are wrong and people step away from them. [sin, evil].

"They know the ordinance of God" - We still know of God but don't accept it.

"They give hearty approval"

Today - No recognized body of moral knowledge.

* Schools & Professional institutions.

When NATURE disappears, KNOWLEDGE and TRUTH disappear.

"Political Correctness" is what is correct in someone's view.
All we have now is "Pressure Groups" pushing their way.
The Church & the way of Christ is just another pressure group.
WILL is the only thing you have to deal with.

TRUTH UNCHANGING - Does not change fundamentally. Good & right are built into human nature.

The human capacity to know the good and the right is distorted by the human WILL to fulfill DESIRE. We want what we want.

This is why a divine source of knowledge is essential to human life. [37:30]

The Genius of Jesus - Jesus sums up the whole law by referring to essential aspects of the human being.

"Love God with you heart, mind, soul & strength and love your neighbor."

Love is to will what is good. To love God is to will what is good for God.

~ The Problem of Integrity - If you intend to do something, you do it. If you don't intend to do it, you don't do it. Integrating what we believe with what we do.

Paul - **Romans 7** - "Disintegrated self"

* Peter, "I will not deny you". He meant it but there was something in Peter that he didn't recognize that will control his behavior. Jesus was teaching Him very carefully that he would deny him three times. Why three times? Once and you could say, "Whoops. I slipped." But three times? Hard time explaining it. Peter went out and wept when realized there was something in him that was not being directed by him but was directing him.

This is the analysis of the essential aspects of the human being. If you love, then that will pull all of them together. That has to be directed toward God and then love your neighbor. If you don't love God, you can't love your neighbor. Love God then we can actually love our neighbor. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the law. As Paul explains, *"If you love your neighbor, you will not...steal, etc."*

What is love and how does it work?

HUMAN NATURE - Six Parts in Human Nature

[Diagram - Renovation of the Heart, p. 37]

Soul, Spirit/Will, Mind, Body, Feelings, Relationships

The parts have to be aligned before we can be subject to the will of God. There's going to have to be an invasion by the Word and Spirit of Christ, a living power in its own right, that comes into the heart through the **MIND**. When that is accepted the result is faith in Christ which re-establishes union with God. The primary function of the center part [mind] is to trust God. It can't do that on its own. It has to interact with other parts.

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* Eve in the Garden - Received a solicitation to not trust God. The temptation - take it into your own hands. Get what you want.

In the Garden: *Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life*

To seduce the individual into taking things into their own hands and not trust God. All we regard as wrong, theft, lying, so, all come back to mistrusting God.

Once the **spirit** [mind/will] comes alive to God because the Gospel that is lodged in the **MIND**, the individual begins the process of working with God for the transformation of the whole self.

"Submit your bodies as living sacrifice. Don't be conformed by the world but be transformed by the renewal of the mind." **(Romans 12:1)**

When aligned with God, the MIND is renewed.

* Peter didn't have to think about denying Christ. He didn't have to ask, "Shall we deny him?" He just did it. He may have been ready for a soldier with a sword. It was a little girl who tripped him up. The social situation and what the **BODY** is ready to do comes together and is ready to act.

The **SOUL** is the computer that runs the whole show. The **SPIRIT** [mind/will] is the Executive Center. You don't want to hear about the computer. You just want it to work. The Executive Center can change the computer [the condition of the **SOUL.**] Through spiritual disciplines...that's what goes on in the transformation of the whole self. This is human nature. Everyone has this.

If they are dead in sin, they don't have the relationship to Christ but they can still hear the word and the Spirit can move in them. If they don't have this and they turn in worship their own bodies and their own soul and their whole life is devoted to themselves.

II. The ROLE of a Human Being - "Dominion with God" [46:50]
[Train to Reign]

The Divine Conspiracy is not to steam roll everything, it is to elicit love & obedience through the development of character so that out of human history comes a certain kind of community that is forever going to have a role forever in the universe.

This is why it's worth the awful things that have happened in it.

Genesis 1:26-30 - The "Creation Covenant"

- *"Let us make man in our image. Let him have **dominion** (responsibility)."*

The assignment for humans is to be responsible for the Earth. [eternal re-purposed]. That's built into human nature * Reforest Mars * Save Whales

It's built into human beings to save the Earth. This is the foundation of a genuine Environmental Ethic not just hugging trees but actually thinking about the world. Is this a lost thought? Because we failed, are we off the hook? No.

Psalm 8 The Psalmist is impressed with the greatness of God and that God cares about Human Beings. [50:00]

v. 1, 3 - God is great and He cares about humans.

v. 2 - A child & infant - inverted nature of the Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Man - "foes"

v. 4 - "What is man that you are mindful of him?"

God thinks about human beings. He cares about humans.

* Homer, "You might meet a god under any rock who might turn you into a turtle."

v. 6-8 - "*You make him to rule over the works of your hands.*"

Function of Humans? To rule, to bring good to pass in creation.

* A CHILD wants to make something and wants to give to his parent.

* Older people want to leave the world a better place.

We create out of what God has already made. This is something to be done under God. He's made us to relate to Him and in relating to Him we would be able to rule. We can't do it on our own. We still try but our efforts are thwarted by our limitations & lack of good will.

Isaiah 63:11-12 - Leadership: God & Moses working together [55:10]

Cooperative aspect of our work with God. Is. 63 - God use to work with us.

v. 11 "*Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses.*"

Moses acted and God made it happen. Moses' right hand and God's glorious arm acting together. That is the way we were meant to live on the Earth under God. God never set us out to be responsible for the Earth in our own strength.

Before Adam sinned, he didn't sweat. He wasn't acting in his own strength.

We sweat to produce bread or demand other people sweat to produce for us.

It will be sweat if you have to do it in your own strength.

Mark 4 - Jesus speaks to the fig tree and by speaking brings in to play the power of God. He acted & spoke with the power of God. He was totally aligned with Kingdom of God. When we work in the Kingdom of God, we work in the Community of God. Jesus was prepared to do that. Moses had a lot of opposition but when he acted, God acted with him.

Luke 16 - Unjust Steward & **Luke 19** - Parable of the Talents [59:30]

Now in Luke 16 and 19 you see discussions, for example, of the "Parable of the Talents" or the money that was given and how it worked. And let's see, 16 is this interesting case of the so called unjust steward, as I recall that and the language here in Luke 16 is very instructive.

You remember the parable of the unjust steward, the fellow who wasn't doing right by his boss, and the boss fired him and the steward then found a way to help himself and help his boss. So he cut deals with the people who owed the money, and the boss at least got something rather than losing everything - and the boss

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was glad for that, and then the unjust steward at least had a possibility of a job with the people he'd cut deals with.

Now you may think that's a pretty shabby way of talking about the reality of the Kingdom of God but Jesus uses real life circumstances to illustrate important points. And so here he says - now we're talking about ruling - OK, ruling because ruling is the vocation, the calling of man.

Verse 9 of Luke 16 he says, *"Make friends for yourself by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."*

Now the friend that you're making to yourself here is God, obviously. So you should use money as a way of advancing God's cause. That's how you rule.

"He that is faithful in a very little thing..." What's the very little thing? Money. Money and prayer are the two first steps in Kingdom acting. We'll come back to that later. *"He that is faithful in very little is faithful also in much. He that is unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much."*

See, that's ruling. You rule in the little things. You use what you have and among the smallest things you have is money. You may say that's me because you may not have much of it, but if you had a lot of it it would still be the smaller things in life. And you would use that in a way that you advance the cause of God for good around you as you ruled in that aspect of your life.

Human Nature and Jesus - Jesus is a Glorious Being [1:02:15]

Now Hebrews 2 shows us how this calling carries over in relationship to Jesus. **Hebrews 1 and 2** as you may recall is a passage where Jesus is put in the right place in the cosmos.

It starts out the book talking about how in times past God spoke to the prophets. Second verse in Hebrews 1, "In these last days he has spoken to us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also made the world." Now see that's standard teaching. We looked at it in Colossians. You can see it in John 1 and elsewhere.

And he is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his nature and he upholds all things by the word of his power. So Jesus is a glorious being, is what the long and short of it is. Much greater than the angels.

But skip to chapter 2 and verse 5 of Hebrews. God did not subject to angels the world to come, the future, the cosmos. The one the world were speaking about.

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And then in those following verses you notice he goes right back and quotes Psalm 8. And that's to make the connection now between the place that God had appointed human beings to, and how that relates to Jesus. So he quotes Psalm 8. What is man that you remember him and so on. Put all things in subjection to it ... under his feet.

Now that 8th verse is key for understanding where we are. Notice what it says. For in subjecting all things to him, now him there is human beings, not Jesus. In subjecting all things to him he left nothing that was not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

Would you agree with me that as the world now runs it isn't in subjection to human beings? Would you even agree that it's probably a good thing? Right? And what you know about human beings might make you hesitate to say, Let's just let human beings have charge of everything.

Now that the Babel imperative is driving humanity in that direction. Do you understand what I'm saying there? See that's what the whole thrust of research and development is among human beings. But not yet. And if you share my view of human beings you'd be thankful that there are few things that aren't under human control. Now when I was a child if someone had said to me, There are going to be multi-million dollar operations selling water to drink, I would have said, You're crazy. What did I know? You want to bet on air? So I think you might... I'm glad that we do not yet see all things subjected to him, and until there's a huge change in humanity I don't want to see that, folks. I don't want to see that.

Next verse, but we do see him - now that's Jesus - who has been made for a little while lower than angels , namely Jesus, because of the sufferings of death crowned with glory that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Now see Jesus comes into the human scene, and now he's going to pull them up eventually where everything can be subject to them, because they're subject to God. Now remember what I said to you, that God's intention for each of us is that we should grow to the point where he can empower us to do what we want. That's what this verse is talking about. Are you with me? You see what I'm saying? See, this is the role for the human being. This is what God made them for. He made them so that this whole cosmos would turn out to be something that is subjected to God through them.

[\[The Church - You & Me - being readied to rule.
God's Global Management Team\]](#)

Who Are We?

[1:07:14]

Now **Revelations 22:5** - we're done with this particular part of the lesson. "*They shall see his face, his name will be on their foreheads and there shall no longer be any night, and the eye shall not have need, and they shall not have need of the light of the lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them and they shall reign forever and ever.*"

Is that talking about anyone in this room? Who's the they? Well the they is you. Isn't that right? They is you. So Jesus said in Matthew 11, Among those born of women there's none greater than John the Baptist but anyone in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:11) Well add that to your list of things to think about when you're thinking about human nature. Do you know that verse? Should we turn to it? I think maybe we'd better.

So look at Matthew 11. Excuse me. Here's what he says in the eleventh verse of Matthew 11. Matthew 11:11. You can remember that one. Truly I say to you among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of the heavens, that's plural by the way - the kingdom of the heavens - in Matthew it is always plural and that has some important point to that, is greater than he.

So now what about this fellow sitting down here with the backwards cap? If you met him in the hall would you be inclined to think he was greater than John the Baptist? He wouldn't even think that if you met him in the hall. Right? But on the authority of the scripture what are we to say about you? Can you say it?

Student: "Greater than John."

Dallas: Greater than John the Baptist. Why? Because when you live in the kingdom of the heavens as a disciple of Jesus you are related to something greater than John the Baptist was related to.

Now, you can quarrel with this. That's up to you, what you do with it. But you want to keep that in the back of your mind when you're trying to think about your nature.

HUMAN NATURE is...

[1:10:15]

So here's the truth about you. Who you are and why you're here.

You are a never ceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

Can you say I am a never ceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe? Can you say that with me? **I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.**

Could you say that to one another? You you are an unceasing spiritual being with

an eternal destiny in God's great universe. See this is the true dignity of the human being.

This is why they were worth dying for. This is why Isaiah 53 says he shall see the travail of his soul. Can you finish that verse? ...and be satisfied. Because of that, see. So you're spiritual in substance. You're never ceasing in duration. You are ruling or creative in destiny. Your life as a spiritual being is completed only by living in and from the Kingdom government of the heavens.

That's why Jesus' message is, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The best way to translate is, has drawn near. That was his message.

And you and I face the challenge: are we going to preach that? Or are we going to preach something else? And everything else that comes out of our work is going to depend on the message we preach. And when we look at the church as we see it now, visibly, what we see is the result of the message that is preached. And it isn't this one.

What is the Message?

[1:12:45]

I'm going to have time to worry over this particular point tomorrow in greater detail but I pause at this moment just so say, What do we tell people? What is our message? Dare we preach the message that Jesus preached?

See, repent means think out, think of how, think about your thinking. "Metanoeo". Think about your thinking. Have a thought about your thoughts in the light of this new fact that the rule of God is now immediately available for you to live in. Immediately.

And then you look at the Gospels, and you see that's what's being presented over and over and over again. People pushing their way in because they've discovered the presence of the Kingdom in the presence of the King. Jesus was a king. Right? I mean that's what Pilate put on his cross, wasn't it? Why did he put it on the cross? Because he understood that was what was being claimed.

In Ephesus, was it not, when you come there they say those who have turned the world upside down elsewhere have come here preaching one king, Jesus. You don't have a king without a kingdom.

Living in a kingdom

[1:14:09]

And one of the deep sicknesses of our theology is that we preach a Jesus without a kingdom. That's why we have a lot of Christians that believe in Jesus but don't believe in God. They don't understand who Jesus was. And so they don't really

have confidence in God.

Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is now available. That's like walking along here with someone who knows this auditorium, and someone who doesn't, with the person who's looking at the building for the first time. And the one who's here says, Turn because the auditorium is at hand. That doesn't mean it's about to come into existence and didn't quite do it. It means it's there. And that's what Jesus...

Now then, the whole all of the Gospels are a manifestation of the presence of the Kingdom to people who will turn to Jesus.

We've talked some about love already. Just remember that to love is to will the good of the beloved. And to know what God wills for things then enables us to know what is good for them. Love can't be separated from God. And if we're going to fulfill our role we're going to live with love for all of creation.

Possessed by Love

[1:15:20]

And if you ever have time to read Jonathan Edward's old treatise on virtue - it's not long and it's a wonderful treatment on love as the principle of the Kingdom of God and of what we're to live in. When we come to the place where we are possessed by love then we are ready to rule. If we love God with every dimension of our being - I'll go back to our circle diagrams - that puts us in a position to be a fully functioning human being for the first time. Human beings because they are loved by God, love God, and through that love others. They are in a position to be a fully functioning human being for the first time.

And so the partial versions of love that do so much to harm human life, where love is confused with desire - and anger results when desire is not fulfilled and so on - that is done away with in every part of our being now. Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

That is something that is increasingly true of us; and as that personal reality of love, which is God after all, possesses our being it enables us to live a free and joyous life beyond legalism. So we don't aim at doing the right thing. We aim at being the kind of person who would do the right thing. And that's the kind of person who is possessed by love and who loves indiscriminately with everything they come in contact. And we fulfill the law because we're that way.

Free of Fear

And then that's where the teaching about perfect love casting out fear takes hold. We are able to live without fear because we know we are loved by God and that

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we love God, and through God we love others and that provokes others towards love of us. Now they may be so messed up that they won't, but generally speaking they will love those who are possessed by love. And so they come to the place where they can live without fear because they are secure in the love of God and they themselves are loving others.

In contrast - if you hear a line from C.S. Lewis again. If man is made ultimate, causal force will eventually rule and thereby abolish humanity by making everything subject to the thrust of desire. The desires of some few who are able to gain the upper hand by force. And if you've never read C.S. Lewis' *Abolition of Man* I do encourage - in the context of the discussions today - to read it, because he had absolutely prophetic insight into the meaning of the Babel imperative, that it meant to abolish human beings as free people devoted to good through love, and replaced them with people who are under the domination of people - other people who live only in terms of their own desires.

So, the divine conspiracy is God's aim to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's Kingdom, by bringing out a world-and-history-wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ himself.

Human nature is built for that. The nature we have is built to become like Christ, to live in the Kingdom of God; and the process of spiritual growth is the process of doing that.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 2 @ 1:19:44** ~ ~ ~

Ministry in the Kingdom of God

So, the Kingdom of God is like leaven. It enters into a reality, works away and now, it has a life of its own.

"The teaching about the Kingdom of God saved my faith in Christ"

Mark 4:26-29 - "All by itself" principle

The part that saved my faith was "the seed sports up and grows. How it does he does not know." As a minister and a Christian, I do not have to make it happen. I learned the more I tried to make it happen, the less it would work. What I had to do was to learn to speak the Word and live in the Kingdom and let the results take care of themselves. When I would do that I would begin to see change in the people I was ministering to. **I had to get out of God's way and let the kingdom work and count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom.**

Progressively I think I learned not to try to get people to do anything, to just stop that all together. It was hard because I was in ministry in a Southern Baptist Church and I was expected to produce results.

* DL Moody to a staggering drunk. "Mr. Moody, I am one of your converts."
"You must be one of mine because you're clearly not one of God's."

I could get out of the business of making things happen.

Do I still win souls? Yes. It is more in terms of putting the sickle in, watching for people who need a little help at a certain transition. Most of what I'm doing is watching the seed grow. Plant the seed, watch it grow. **You don't make it happen. That is one of the most important things for us to understand if we are to participate in The Divine Conspiracy as leaders and ministers to have confidence in the power of the Word of the Kingdom.**

We do need to convey the idea that there is a Kingdom of God we can seek and find through Jesus Christ. If someone wants to find the Kingdom, I should present Jesus to them. I should talk about Him. I should speak about *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. I should magnify Him and lift Him up and say the wonderful things about Him that are true of Him. In appropriate ways keep that before people's minds. That is the way to bring people to the point of understanding the Kingdom and to bring them to the point where they are prepared to enter the Kingdom of God.

Jesus taught about the Kingdom constantly. *"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else that you need will be added."*

What a glorious promise! *Now what does it mean?*

The Nature of God

[7:20]

We must start with the nature of God because it is His kingdom. The Kingdom is a spiritual reality. The Word of the Kingdom is a spiritual reality - it has a life of it's own. John 6, Jesus insulted the Jewish people by saying they have to eat His flesh and drink His blood (**John 6:63**) "*The Words that I speak to you are spirit, they are life.*" Through the words He spoke He communicated His substance as a person. What does that mean? You participate in His substance by taking in His word. They are "Spirit", they are "Life".

1. God is Spirit - Exodus 3:14

[9:00]

I Am *that* I Am. My being rests on My being.

I do not depend on anything else. Totally self sufficient being.

Everything else that is physical depends upon something else.

With that you don't have God. What characterizes God as Spirit.

John 4 - Spirit - God is something that is self sufficing, self dependence.

Your free will is your spirit. It is free because it is not determined by something else. It's extremely important because that's the part of you that relates you to God - your will, your heart. If your will is tied into God, you take on the glorious features of God's Spirit. By tying your will into God, you are in a position to carry out your responsibility before God to govern on His behalf. Makes you count uniquely for what God is creating in the world and sustaining it.

Spirit is un-bodily, personal power. Your spirit is not bodily. That's why the learned world, the professional world will not talk about 'freedom'.

* Divorce - 50% of marriages end in divorce. It is rarely said, "This is because people choose to get divorced." They will think in terms of causes. Causation is the only category of analysis of human life. That is one of the reasons why moral knowledge disappears because it has to do with the will and the character as coming out of the will. Whether or not you are a good person or a bad person, do what is right morally or do your duty, that is is a matter of your choice, not a matter of causation.

* If you are going to shoot someone, you have to have a gun. There is some causation involved. You can have a gun and not shoot anyone. An action requires more than just conditions which make it possible. It requires a choice.

The category of the *spirit* is a scandal to the modern world. You have to understand that as nothing less than a straight forward assault on the 1st & 2nd of

the Ten Commandments. That goes back to what we were talking about earlier that this is a world not acknowledging the presence of God.

2. God is Life Giving - John 5:26 - God gives life, sustains life [15:27]

Life is self initiating, self sustaining, self directing activity.

God is the only one who has that kind of life. We have some measure of it.

* The goldfish is alive...for now. A plant, a seed has some degree of life.

The basic reality — "God is in Himself a sweet society."

What was God doing before the creation of the world?

He was enjoying themselves. **John 17:5**

"The glory I had with You before the world was."

Glory - great power, beauty, richness of their relationship.

God is too Many to be One, and too One to be Many.

* Casual Sex is a corruption of the personality. Using "Hook up" for sex.

That's a reflection of the broken idea of personality.

"Becoming one with a prostitute." (Paul)

"Casual sex" is simply a perverted idea of what a person is. I can't be that close to a person and be "casual". You get out of sexual temptation by understanding what the other person is and understanding the kind of relationship that is meant to hold between persons.

Our problem with the Trinity is not some much with the Trinity but understanding persons.

John 17:22-26 - *"The Glory you have given me I have given them that they may be one just as we are one."*

[*"Glory"* is a relational description.]

The Love the Father had for me before the foundations of the world. That is the nature of God - God is love.

"Love one another as I have loved you." (**Jn 13:34-35**)

You might well wonder, "Do I really want that?" Sounds pretty smothering. "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" song. What is the nature of spiritual reality? You feel a threat - because you're saying, "how am I going to sustain myself if human relations are that tight?" It's scary.

Love comes from the Father, Son & Spirit into the life of the individual with freedom but not freedom in a matter of atomism and individualism

"I will love you forever" in marriage. We don't know how to be married.

"Forever" - you can only do if God enables me to do.

* Homosexual marriage? Why not if that's all "marriage" means?

The Trinity extends its kind of love thru the redeemed community.

I Corinthians 13:13 - Expression of the profundity of the Trinity. It is a spiritual reality. It requires a person submit themselves to God and receive from Him agape.

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If you do not understand this is what love does not what you do, if will nail you to the floor. You are not going to do this. Love is going to do this. You submit yourself to "love" (to God). Love doesn't just mean desire. When the desire is gone, what is left?

When we think about the Kingdom of God, we have to understand that out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want. [26:00]

To bring out of history a community of every tongue, tribe and nation to play a major role in the future of the universe.

Ephesians 3:8-10 [26:55]

v.8 - *"Unfathomable riches of Christ of the mystery hidden in God."*

"Mystery" - Not something you can't figure out. A mystery in the New Testament is something that has been hidden and is now revealed - God's world-wide plan of redemption to include all nations & tongues.

v. 10 - *"that the manifold wisdom of God now may be made known through the church to the rulers & authorities in Heavenly places (angels)."*

Spiritual beings do not understand the greatness of God but they will understand the many sided wisdom of God thru the church to the rulers.

Ephesians 2:7, *"in order that in the ages (eons, millennia) to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*

[\["ages" see also Revelation 5:22\]](#)

This means the Church is a revelation to the universe of the greatness of God. God's ultimate intention is the Kingdom of God and human beings place in it.

[\[The Church - the gathered group of people living in the Kingdom of God\]](#)

I Corinthians 6:1-3 - A shocking church not able to adjudicate disagreements in the church. Let the kids make the decisions. We realize the church in the New Testament is very different from what it has become in other times. We shall "judge" angels. The judge in the Bible not just trial but also includes positions of government over the angels. (See the role of the Judge in biblical times.)

Rev. 22:5 *"Thru the ages, no light, lamp, sun...they shall reign for ever and ever."*

3. God's Ultimate Intention for Us is Unknown [33:00]

* Streets of gold - Whoever made this Earth can turn out streets of gold without any problem. Just rearrange the elements that make up gold.

* Turning water into wine. If you made the water in the first place, you can do wine.

* Gates of pearl just needs a bigger oyster. People who are troubled by this are not long on logic, they are short on imagination, if you assume God. If you don't assume, forget it. All that is left is human beings and nature as they know it.

- The nature of the human will is never meant to run independently of God
God's ultimate intention for us is declared and stands out and that is a part of His Kingdom for us. We will move into that as time goes by.

The Kingdom of God Throughout the Bible

[36:00]

The unity of the Bible is the progressive with-ness in God's relation in His kingdom to human beings individually and in groups. [[With-God Life](#)]

Think of how God's with-ness proceeds from Genesis to Revelation.

* Adam & Eve - Did God just drop Adam and Eve in the garden and leave them? No. It was His intention to be with them. They hid. In order to respect what He is aiming at in human history, He allows Himself to hide from them. Humanity begins to develop. It goes down all the way to the point that God says, "I am sorry for making human beings."

* Noah comes in; The destruction of living things on the earth. New covenant with Noah established. Then individuals are selected for a special relationship with God.

* Isaac - Look at them in terms of being with God. God was with Isaac in such a way that goodness was manifested to such a degree that his neighbors were scared of him. He prospered to such an extent, they asked him to move away. He moved then they wanted to make a covenant with him because they saw **God was with** them. **The "with-God" principle.**

* The People of Israel and the Tabernacle - (**Exodus 29:46**) So **God could be with** His people without destroying them. God wants to be dwell among His people. But it isn't a simple operation. He has to arrange the circumstances for this to be done. This is one stage. Now he has agreed of a group of people, the tribe of Israel. He arranges a new way to be with Him - the Tabernacle.

What does that mean? Try to put yourself in God's position. Suppose you see this great being by presenting yourself to a person could totally destroy them. That's the difficulty. How can he be present without destroying them? That would mean allowing them to make choices to come to a place and a routine to meet Him. They were scared of God. Remember after Sinai, the people pleaded that they did not want see God again. You speak to Him and then come talk to us. The general term is mediator. God is working out means of mediation so people could

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come to and go from Him. That's what the Tabernacle is about. Before the Tabernacle, they had altars but that was not something that allowed a people to come to God in a way that they could have a life together in His Kingdom.

God wants to dwell among His people. (Rev. 21: That's how the Kingdom is manifest.)

How this developed through the Old Testament Temple, Destruction, Exile, then transfer of mediation from a building the Tabernacle to the Temple to a written Word and the Rabbinic Judaism that dominates at the time of Jesus. Now it is the Torah and the rituals of family and Temple that continue the process of mediation that continues up to today.

[44:00] Christ came to break God's kingdom out of cultural captivity. The big issue in the book of Acts is whether or not you can be a Christian and not a Jew. The word Christian emerges in Antioch of Syria that you could not longer treat people as Jews because there were now Gentiles. The expansion into the whole world is disciples from of all nations. [Is he doing that again today with the Christian Church?]

It is almost impossible for us to think today what that meant. The system of mediation that had been present up to the time of Jesus was now set aside. The new system of mediation was one simple thing - Jesus. Paul says, "*There is one God and one mediator the man Christ Jesus.*" The whole thing is thrown open to all nations. All that is required is simply the presence of Jesus. The Kingdom is present with Him. You have Him, you have the Kingdom.

There was a whole battle that went on among the Jewish Christians. And there was a battle among Jesus & the Jews. The battle became very hot. Jesus said things that would get him killed. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "*You compass land & sea to make one proselyte and when you got him you make him two-fold more a child of hell than you yourselves are.*" (**Matthew 23:15**)

This set me on my ear as a young Southern Baptist minister. How am I bringing people into the Kingdom of God? (It may turn out you're just trying to make Southern Baptist) I had to think about how I am bringing people into the Kingdom of God. If you bring people into the Kingdom of God, that presupposes a different view of what disciple means. Frankly, there wasn't much said about being a "disciple" in that setting. That's a part of the whole idea you can be a Christian without being a disciple. *You can be a Baptist without being a disciple. I knew a lot of them.* I was clawing my way of that position myself. That's a part of realizing that God now has opened the door in a new way and taken the Kingdom of God out a strictly cultural and institutional setting and put it on the basis of a personal relationship of being with God.

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We can not underestimate this. When we think about social Issues & social justice, the real issue is "loving your neighbor as yourself."

What happens if your neighbor is not one of your kind?

Colossians 3:11-14, *"No Greek, Jew, Circumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Slave, Free, but Christ is all and in all."*

Distinctions are blotted out. * Scythians are the bottom of the barrel of humanity. God's intended "with-ness" goes beyond all human barriers. Human barriers continue to be among the things that cause the most evil and grief among human beings. * Genocides * World Conflicts

The Church itself is presented as the dwelling place of God. God has designed His people as His dwelling place and that is going to continue throughout eternity.

Rev. 22 takes you to back to that.

The Problem of Meaning in Human Life

[49:50]

Life in the Kingdom of God solves that problem. Why do things matter? What do they lead to? Do they lead to anything that is of enduring worth? If things are meaningful, they carry you. "Meaningful work" is work that counts for something that makes it much easier for you to get up and do it.

The mark of the presence of meaning in life is precisely a kind of energy and direction that makes life not something you have to carry by willpower. You're able to more joyously in a stronger way to do the things you need to do because they have meaning. They lead to something.

The Kingdom of God comes and says, "Enter the Kingdom, live in the Kingdom, allow your life to count for things that are good, permanent, enduring, lasting forever." That enables one to being to live on a different plain.

That presupposes the Kingdom is real. It is not just imaginary. As you interact with the Kingdom, that carries you, gives you strength, gives you direction and **that means power that has to be learned how to deal with.**

Lk. 11:20 - Jesus, *"If I cast out demons, know the Kingdom has come upon you."*

* That power that is seen in His life should also be seen in the presence of His people.

* Signs & Wonders are not the gospel but they are the natural expression of the presence of the Kingdom both they are given to Christ's people to meet real needs.

Threefold Ministry of Jesus in the Kingdom

[52:30]

Matt 9:35 - Preaching, Teaching & Healing (Manifest) the Kingdom

Proclaimed - Announced, "The Kingdom is at hand." He did not bring it into existence but He proclaimed the new availability.

"The Kingdom is not in word but in power" I Corinthians 4:20

The capacity to do things. The Word of the Kingdom produces a kind of life or a results.

Spirit is un-bodily (non physical) personal (thoughts, feelings, will) power

It's personal - not the vague kind of "force be with you". You don't learn to manipulate it. It's not spiritual laws that you work. That's a form of idolatry. Spiritual reality is not subject to your will. This is a personal relationship. Jesus is living in a relationship to a personal reality which is the Kingdom of God. That's why we don't have mechanical results. It's a personal negotiation and a personal relationship. That gives you involvement in a meaningful life that is lived in the Kingdom of God. Your life is part of an eternal life and the results that are gained lasts for eternity.

Compared to the Secular view - Nothing & nothing. Nothing that comes of it lasts. It's all over. The sun will become a giant red ball and that's the end of the earth.

* "Tolstoy Complex" - *Confession*. After much success, it all is nothing and amounts to nothing. If you like what you do you can live on that. More than just "liking" what I do in the immediate delight of what I'm doing. Meaninglessness that lies ahead makes it hard to go on.

* Myth of Sisyphus (Camus) - *"Roll the rock up the hill. Watch it roll down. Roll it up again."* If that view is true, so be it. We have to accept it. We can be brave, we can be tough, or as Camus suggests, commit suicide.

The presence of Jesus and His Kingdom shows that this is not true.

The Meaning of Life for the Believe in Christ

[57:25]

What is the meaning of life? The love and purpose of God for us. We are embedded in His eternal life. What makes our life eternal is involvement in His eternal life. In **Romans 8 (29-31)** you have these marvelous verses that spell this out. Paul has just said that *"all things work together for those that love God and are called into purposes."* That's life in the Kingdom.

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son..." See that's purpose, that's meaning.

"...that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?"

Then he goes on to describe the path of life a person has who is embedded in the Kingdom of God. All the hard things turn to our good. Now, you can't have that unless you have a vision of life in the Kingdom. All the hard things turn to good. Even aging—the body breaking down. This passage in **II Corinthians 4:16**, "*even though our outward man is perishing. Our inward man is being renewed day by day.*" The trials of the present time are nothing compared to "*the great weight of glory which they are working.*" He talks about how we are inwardly renewed as we look "*not at the things that are temporal but at the things that are eternal*" and how the temporal things are visible, the eternal things are invisible.

All that fits in to this picture of a meaningful life in the Kingdom of God. We look forward, we are carried forward by meaning. Drama is a word that we need to learn to use. We should be living a dramatic life. It helps us I think to really come to grip with how our life is going. Is there drama in our lives? "Drama" refers to the ups and downs of meaningful existence in pursuit of good against opposition. That's what drama is. Some of us may feel like we could stand a little less drama because the opposition may be pressing us very hard. But, living in the eternal Kingdom of God now is what gives us this framework.

Jesus' Teaching on the Gospel of the Kingdom [1:00:33]

Matthew 3 - John the Baptist, "*Repent, the Kingdom of Heavens is at hand.*"

Matthew 4:17 - Same message, same words from Jesus

Matthew 5 - Beatitudes - Teaching about the Kingdom. The order begins & ends with the Kingdom. The Beatitudes are basically a proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 9:35-38 - Jesus went about preaching the Kingdom of God

Matthew 13 - Parables are stories of the Kingdom (parallel passages in Luke)

Matthew 11:12 - The transition into the Kingdom from the Jewish system. Until John the Baptist, the Law & the Prophets were proclaimed as the officially appointed doorway into the Kingdom of God. Since John the Baptist, the gospel of the Kingdom is preached. [Jesus began His public ministry when John was imprisoned. He knew His was the only voice.] People came by force into the Kingdom.

Luke 16:16 - Kingdom followers do not stand on Jewish proprieties.

Matthew 8 - They charge in.

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- * Leper — *"Jesus, if you would, you could make me clean."*
Jesus touched him with a human touch. The leper bulled his way in.

- * Roman Centurion — He understood Kingdom power.

Matthew 21:43 - *The Kingdom shall be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruit of it.* That's what happened in the book of Acts was a description of how **Matthew 21:43** was carried out. The Kingdom of God was not in the Jews' peculiar possession to make it available to the world. [1:06:35]

John 3:5 - "To enter the Kingdom you have to be born from 'above'."

"Above" - Entry into the Kingdom is not mediated through any human institution. The whole passage as an illustration of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and how it now bypasses human institutions entirely.

"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." **Romans 10:13**

The Church and the Kingdom [1:08:47]

The church does not omit the kingdom. The kingdom is present in the church.

Romans 14:17 - *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

What happens in the church that keeps us from being a discipling body of Christ? We are distracted. These people were distracted about eating. Paul says, "Don't worry about that." Eating comes up over and over.

When in church matters we want to understand that the Kingdom of God is manifested by a kind of righteousness or goodness, peace & joy that can only be supernaturally produced.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is the announcement that God is here that anyone who wants to find Him can come through Jesus Christ and find the Kingdom of God.

Seek the Kingdom of God [1:11:00]

Matthew 6:33 - How do you seek the Kingdom of God?

Find out what God is doing - the Kingdom - and do that.

How do you find out what God is doing?

Observe Jesus Christ. Look at Him. Listen to what He said. Watch what He did. That's what God is doing. Now do that where you are and you will find the Kingdom of God and the kind of righteousness that God has. When you find that everything else you need will be provided. *Good night, what a statement that is!*

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Look at the 23rd Psalm - *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack."*

Same thing? Sure! Now we have a face on the Shepherd, a person to point to and say, "That's where you can find it...Jesus Christ." We can't just rest in the name. We have to move to the reality and the presence of the Kingdom.

Prayer

[1:13:14]

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 3 @ 1:14:00** ~ ~ ~

~ 04 [Kingdom of God](#) [YouTube link]

[1:53:00]

Opening Prayer by Dallas- [\[powerful request to honor the name of Jesus\]](#)

Now Lord, we ask for help again as we come to look into your Word, and try to understand the tremendous thing that you turned loose on the earth when you came and lived and taught, and gave your life on the cross, rose from the dead, founded the church - lives in the church and continues today to be here with us.

Now the truth is that none of us here probably have the foggiest idea what you want to accomplish with us. And so we give that up to you and ask you to have your way in what is said and what is done not only this evening but in the times we are together here this week and then putting it into practice in our lives.

So give us what we need Lord, in the way we need it. Move us on in the path of discipleship and glorious union with you in this life and forever. We ask you to that to honor the name above all names, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

I. The Substance and Essence of the Kingdom

[1:15]

Finishing up what we were talking about last time now, the substance and essence of the Kingdom. What the Kingdom is. Now this is the great problem that faces people who try to talk about the gospel.

Thank you very much, Pete. That's better.

That try to talk about the gospel, and especially about the Kingdom. Talk about the Kingdom becomes invariably enmeshed in social and political issues. That's not new. That's the way it was in Jesus' own day. They could not conceptualize what it would mean for him to be king other than as the king of a political order. And you may recall in the first chapter of the book of Acts as they go out and walk out to towards the mount of transfiguration, Jesus is getting ready to become no longer visible to them. **Acts 1:6-11** And he's ascending back to the place where he is at the right hand of the father even now.

That's a real place, by the way, in the universe. We don't know where it is. We wouldn't know what to do with it if we did. We'd just try a Babel thing probably, except this time it would be a spaceship. Try to get a spaceship to go there. I wouldn't want to approach it. Really. That's a real place, and Jesus is still there. But he's also still here. And the continuing incarnation of Jesus is in his people.

But as they went out you may recall on the - in the first chapter of the book of Acts, Lord will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel ? **Acts 1:6** Now what they meant by that was, are you going to get a government in Israel that is

capable of whipping everybody? That's what they meant by it.

And you know, having observed what he could do, they had good reason to believe that if he wanted to do that, he could make it happen. We talk jokingly about people who can walk on water. He really did it. He understood how to suspend gravity. Just think of what he could have done with his powers in terms of weapons and so on. Well, that's pretty scary.

A different way

Now, he knew that nothing would be gained that way. And that's why he took a different route. Just to reassert yourself in human kingdom, as that was understood, would do nothing for the project of history. The one that God had put afoot and was carrying through with - as I've referred to as the divine conspiracy - he knew that.

But still in Acts 1:3, and we're gonna take a little walk through the book of Actstomorrow, because there's a real hermeneutics problem here that we need to address. Some people think that Paul preached one gospel and Jesus preached another. That Paul preached a gospel of forgiveness of sins and the church, and that Jesus preached one about the Kingdom of God and so forth and so on. And there's just a whole wilderness of confusion - and many, many great forests have been sacrificed to publish books on this topic. And it's really sad because they just can't get it out of their head. It's gotta be a political kingdom.

[* see #6 28:20-33:20]

Now here's what I'm saying to you, and it's extremely important to get this. Because you have to be in a certain manner an ontologist if you're gonna understand the Scripture. An ontologist is one who understands being, what it is for things to be and what kinds of things there are. And we talked about the Trinitarian nature of God, a spiritual nature of God and so on. And what we have to understand is that the Kingdom of God is simply God's ruling. It's his ruling. It's his governing. That's the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is simply His God's ruling - His governing. [5:00]

And what Jesus came to preach is not that there is a Kingdom of God. What Jesus came to make available was entry into the Kingdom of God. See, when you see the record of his message, his message is never - there is a Kingdom of God! Well, people would have looked at him like he was an idiot. I mean, yeah, what else is new. Everyone knew there was a Kingdom of God. They knew that. And they were looking for it to come as a political reality on earth, because they had confidence that the promises of God to the Jewish nation would be fulfilled. That's why they were sure that it was gonna come. That's why every so often you'd have a bunch of people get up and get an army and say - let's go do it now.

But the basic reality of the Kingdom of God is simply the person of God and the

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instrumentalities by which he rules. If we had time we could talk about those instrumentalities. They are of course God's own direct action. They're his Spirit. They're his Son. They're his Word. They're angels. That's why, you see, God is called Lord of Hosts over and over in the Old Testament. It was because he was recognized to have this incredible army of angels. Hosts were angelic. There are probably more angels than there are numbers. There's a whole lot of them. There's a lot of numbers too, aren't there? But still that's the nature of God is to create at that level.

Three Kingdoms

[7:00]

And there's the church. There's other people who are godly people who serve God. Those are all part of the Kingdom of God. And then of course there's your kingdom and mine, and the biggest threat to the Kingdom of God in my life is my kingdom. And then there's the kingdom of darkness. And these three kingdoms are what make up the scene of battle in human life. And when you look at all the terrible things on earth and you say - why are those people in the Sudan doing that to those other people in the Sudan, and so on, you have to understand these are kingdoms that are carrying out the will of human beings or darker agents still. And the will of the human beings and the darker agents are against the will of God.

So now you almost have to pause over that for a moment and say let it soak in. The Kingdom of God is God acting.

Now some of his actions are not things that he has to attend to all the time. For example probably the arrangement of furniture in your apartment or house expresses your will. But you don't have to stand there and hold the chairs in place, right? They can express your will without that.

And God's will is expressed in arrangements that he has established, laws that he has laid down so that things behave in certain ways and then creation runs by those. And for our part a good deal of the responsibility we have as human beings is to learn those laws and how to live by them and how to be responsible in the production of good that is appropriate to human beings given the nature and the place that they have that we've talked about. So now the only thing outside of the will of God is rebellious human and angelic wills. Those are the only things outside. Everything else conforms to the will of God.

And another thing we need to say about the Kingdom before we go on is - is it is not in your heart. It ain't there. It's in reality, and your heart is in it, if anything. But there's a... People bounce back and forth from saying that it's a political order, to it's being just sort of little warm thought in your heart. And it isn't either one of those. It is God reigning. It is God ruling. So those are things we need to make sure that we keep in mind.

Language and Reality in the Kingdom

Now we don't want to become sticklers about the language. That is to say we don't want a new - start a new Kingdom of God denomination or something like that. You know. And many times in the history of the church you've had the reality of the Kingdom without the language. One of the clearest points of that was soon after the Protestant Reformation, and there have

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been other times. I mean they talked about the Kingdom of God, but that was not...they did not make it the center of their presentation of the gospel. What is essential is not the language but the reality.

And around the time of the Reformation and afterwards during the time of the Puritans in England and of the Pietists and a little bit later in Germany, they had an understanding of the offer in Christ to be something that included your whole life. And that is the crucial point...

If you're preaching a gospel that does not mean redemption for your whole life, you haven't got the right one. [10:43]

Listen to these words of Paul after going through that wonderful presentation that we talked about about the Scythians and the Greeks and the Jews and all of that, he goes on to say that Christ is all and in all. (**Colossians 3:11**) And then he says, "Put on therefore as the elect of God holy and beloved, bowels of mercies and kindness and long suffering humility, and meekness of mind, forbearing one another, forgiving one another. If anyone has a quarrel against anyone, as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Colossians 3:12-13 Isn't that wonderful? Wouldn't you like to join, to be in a church like that?

And above all these things he says, put on agape. Divine love which is the bond of perfectness of the perfection. These wonderful progression you see like in Romans 5, 2 Peter 1, and Colossians 3 always culminate in love. Agape is a capstone. Ties a ribbon around it, you might think. It's the bond of perfectness.

And he says, and he goes to say, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which you are also called in one body and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and always teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your heart to the Lord." (**Colossians 3:16**) Why don't we do that?

And then cap that wonderful passage off that runs from **Colossians 3:1-17** and you know, if you haven't memorized it, I really encourage you to memorize that. It'll do a lot for you. Verse 17: "Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Now that's not the only place that says it, but this is one of the best statements as to what it's all about. So think about it. Whatever you do in word or deed, now that pretty well covers it doesn't it? Can you think of anything that's left out? Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what does it mean to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? It means do it on his behalf and from his resources. Whatever you do. See that's the inclusiveness that we're talking about. And that is the reality of the Kingdom. That's the vision of the Kingdom of God, and we want to live in that.

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But, what I'm saying now is we don't need to get sticky about the words. We want the reality. And the language and the concept of the Kingdom of God is very helpful, and we do also have the fact that that's how Jesus that's how he put it.

Trust the Kingdom of God - [14:00] But the Kingdom of God is all inclusive. It takes in everything. It means we can trust God with everything that whatever we let him have charge of in our lives he will take that into the Kingdom of God.

Now remember how can you...can you translate that for me? That means he will take that into his ruling and reigning. Now that's why the stuff in say **Matthew 6** which Jesus you know talk about the birds and the flowers and all that sort of stuff. And you wonder what's this guy talking about? You say well maybe we'll set that to music. Make a song out of it. It's so pretty. No it's sober reality, see? It's one of those many cases of Jesus where you just wonder, could this guy possibly be real? What's he talking about? He says don't be concerned about tomorrow. My advice to you is just trust God. Don't worry about things. Anything!

["Wealth" - Matthew 6:19-34" [DC #12 21:10-29:40](#) p. 102]

That's what it means to trust Jesus is to believe that he's in charge of everything that you let him be in charge of. And if something happens that you don't like, he'll bring something good out of it. Something happens that injures you, he will turn it into something good.

So you can sum it up by saying - I like to use this language because I think the Lord gave it to me quite a long time ago, and it really seems to make people squirm. What he's really saying is, **"This world is a perfectly safe place for you to be."** [15:40]

Now how can you say that to someone who's suffering and dying and being martyred or something of that sort? Well, that's how big the Kingdom is. And we're gonna talk more about how that works out. But the important thing is to realize that wholeness. Don't worry about the language. If you've got a better way of putting it, that's fine. You won't have any quarrel with Jesus about that or with Paul. It's perfectly all right to put it in other words if you get the reality. The reality is now that I'm invited to take everything that pertains to me, bring it to Jesus, put it at his feet, leave it there.

You know the old song, If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold, and you have to get along with meager fare. [Lyrics to Leave it There] You know those words? Just remember in his words how he feeds the little birds. Bring your burden to the Lord, and leave it there. Now, when you're worrying, you're not leaving it there. You go pick it up, and turn it over and look at it and lay it down again, maybe. Just leave it there. Take your hands off it. Go and do something else.

Now that's what Jesus is teaching when he teaches in the Sermon on the Mount. And when he says don't be worried about anything, lovely language there.

Don't be anxious

Excuse me. Let's just look at some words there from the sixth chapter. He's carrying on about these birds again. And he says verse 25 of Matthew 6, "For this reason I say to you don't be anxious for your life as to what shall you eat or what you drink, or for your body as to what you should put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Now some people don't know that they are. "Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, neither do they reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are they not worth much more...Are you not worth much more than they?" **Matthew 6:26**

Now an interesting exercise is try to price someone in birds. How many birds would you think someone is worth? How many birds are you worth? Two crows and a cockatoo. See, Jesus is saying - look, God has an order in which things fit. And you're a part of that order, and you can trust that. Which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? What does...what good does it do by anxious being anxious, what does it do you?

He goes on to talk about these - the way God care for things. So verse 31, Don't be anxious then saying what shall we eat, drink, what shall we clothe ourselves with? For these things the Gentiles eagerly seek. Now remember Gentiles means people who don't know God. People who don't know God are the ones who spend their time worrying about what they're going to eat or drink. Excuse me.

Put the Kingdom First

But seek first, that is put it first, to be involved with his Kingdom. Seek first his Kingdom. Now that means find out what God is doing and do it with him. What is God doing, do that with him.

Now, I like to suggest wordings for language that we don't commonly associate any meaning with. So now what do you - what meaning do we normally associate with, seek first the Kingdom of God? Well, I mean you would face that challenge. What do you associate with? And for most folks I think, they don't associate anything with it. Think pretty thoughts. Or maybe, you know, sing a Beatles song or something of that sort. And just sort of emote.

I'm suggesting to you that this means to find what God is doing and do it with him. And a good key to that of course is to look at what he says in the Law and in what comes forward in Jesus. And when you do this, all other things will be added.

Now you might want to put a cross reference there to Joshua 1:8. Here's a verse that runs parallel with this. Psalm 1 also runs parallel with it, if you remember that. Joshua 1:8 says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, and you shall meditate therein day and night." No time out for watching "Friends" [TV show]. You have to give that up. What's that gonna do to your life? You end up...probably you're gonna do better to have the law

running than Friends running.

I mean all of these weird things that they have on television - "Seinfeld". You ever look at "Seinfeld"? What a vision of the good life! I think the 23rd Psalm is better than "Seinfeld", don't you? No commercials. This book of the law will not depart out of your mouth. But you shall meditate, and really the idea there is you'll kind of be muttering it. Meditate day and night. That's why it says it won't depart out of your mouth. That you may observe to do according to all that is written therein. Then you will make your way prosperous and you will have good success.

Why? Because by doing that you have aligned yourself with the Kingdom of God.

Align yourself with God

See, the whole human project now is to get the human being aligned with what God is doing. That's God's Kingdom. And that includes of course things that we do in ministry. It would include all of the things that we associate with manifesting the presence of the Kingdom. It would include dealing with demons if that's necessary, dealing with sickness if that's necessary.

Doesn't mean you're always going to win, because you're not. You know Jesus didn't misfire, but probably you and I are so limited. Actually I don't know what it would do to me if I never lost. I mean, can you imagine a person who, whenever they pray for anyone they just get healed. Well, Jesus was like that. But frankly I would be afraid for me if I came even close. I don't, so I don't have to worry about that, but I see enough of it that I know it's real.

But it also applies to just things like driving down the road. That would be included in whatsoever you do in word or deed, wouldn't it? Driving down the road. So I do that in the name of Jesus. Transforms everything.

Sometimes I'll drive all the way and just sing, Hallowed be thy name. Hallowed be thy name. See, a good thing is to get a good phrase and just keep it floating for a long period of time. Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, they will be done. Just keep that circulating. See you can teach yourself to pray without ceasing by using the word of God and just letting it run. Become a part of your body.

Some of you know about what is called the breath prayer of Russian Orthodoxy. Where you repeat - you have people who train themselves in such a way that by their very breathing they are accustomed to saying - they use a phrase, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me. I think that's a little morbid myself. And I have done that, and you can do that. I think you can substitute some other language.

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"Hallowed be thy name", is wonderful. Just try it, OK? Just try it. Train yourself to just say Hallowed be thy name while you're living through all the things you live through. See, that will help you do what Jesus is talking about here. Jesus says seek first the Kingdom, and everything else will be added. See that's the promise of the Scriptures. That's the reality of living in the Kingdom of God.

And so Jesus adds a little joke here at the end of **Matthew 6**. You know he does inject a little humor into things. And this is one of those cases. He says don't be anxious for tomorrow, because tomorrow will have enough evil to provide for tomorrow. And you won't have to borrow any of it for today, because you'll have enough today to last you till tomorrow. So just leave it over there. See?

And that's what he's saying, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. So he's just trying to inject a little humor, a little pleasant humor into this situation. You don't need to borrow troubles from the future, because you have enough today. That's the way the days are. And he's just saying turn it loose. Turn it loose. See because you're living in the Kingdom of God. So that's a...that's the picture that we want now.

Understand your forgiveness

[26:20]

Now if you can get that - as I mentioned, right after the Protestant Reformation, people, the whole issue of forgiveness was so big that it included everything. You read an old book like John Owen's book on *Forgiveness of Sins*, you'll see that forgiveness just included everything. People were so into the release from bondage to sin, and they didn't just think of forgiveness in terms of getting the guilt off but rather getting the sin off. Do you know that old hymn that says, Be of sin the double cure. / Rock of Ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee. Remember that part where it says, Be of sin the double cure? / Cleanse from wrath and make me pure. [Lyrics to Rock of Ages]

All right. So it isn't... Or the old Wesleyan hymn, He breaks the power of canceled sin. [Lyrics to Oh For A Thousand Tongues to Sing] See, sin that has been canceled before God can still have power over you. But full redemption in Christ means you walk away from it. You don't even need it any more. He breaks the power of canceled sin and sets the prisoner free. And that understanding was something that really was Kingdom.

Even though they didn't use the word because it was all inclusive of life. And that's what we're aiming for is that kind of all inclusiveness.

We want to understand that every moment can be holy. And when read our things that people often know like Brother Lawrence's *Practicing the Presence of God*. And so one of the reasons that grabs people so is because it presents the whole

life. And that theme of practicing the presence of God which goes back before Brother Lawrence is a way of understanding Kingdom reality.

All right. Well we'll have some more work to do on that.

II. Paul and the Gospel - "The Riches of Christ"

[28:30]

You make a disciple by ravishing people with the reality of the Kingdom

- * Buy the field with the buried treasure. Do what he could to buy the field
- * Pearl of great price

Once you see the Kingdom of God, you'll gladly give them up.

Once you understand who Jesus is and what it means for your life, you'll realize discipleship to Jesus is the greatest opportunity you'll have in life.

It seems very often people who profess the name of Christ don't understand what they've been given. If you don't understand the greatness of the Kingdom, you can't preach, teach, offer the Kingdom.

Ephesians 3:8: "The unsearchable riches of Christ"

("unfathomable" - can't reach bottom)

Your God is Too Small by JB Philips. We're not thinking big enough

We have a tiny, puny Christ who doesn't compare well with others

- * L. Ron Hubbard vs. Jesus

- * USC Students ask, *Why are you a disciple of Jesus?*

Who else did you have in mind? Buddha, Gandhi, John Lennon...

Who is to be compared to Christ?

Everyone is following somebody. Usually 3 or 4 people. Half the time they don't know who they were. It's people we pick up along the way. People are not thinking about what is determining their lives. **"Who am I really following?"**

- * Dallas Willard's grandmother - godliness & goodness

The goodness of people ordinarily is fathomable, but not Christ.

Paul's personal standing with Christ that was exceptional:

He was nurtured on Israel and the glory of the unique covenant people

He had a personal encounter with Jesus that was history making

He had special responsibility in teaching.

He was the first one who got it. He got the message of Jesus.

He was distinctive.

He understood the lowliness of Jesus as a servant.

He experienced the glorious reality of Jesus Christ post resurrection.

His family drove him out when he came back home, possibly post Arabia

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He was personally tutored by Jesus Christ but not with Jesus in the flesh.

I Cor. 15:10 - Grace of God worked more effectively in Him than all
He understood the hope of God given to all the people on the Earth.
He carried the battle of the Church beyond Judaism to the Gentiles
"You can be Jesus' person without being Jewish"

What are the Riches of Christ?

1. His Riches: Physical Cosmos - at the Disposal of Christ [41:25] [CREATION]

* Carl Sagan, *The Cosmos* - "The physical cosmos is all there is"

Mark 6:35-45 Jesus manifested His power over matter
v. 41 - Gave thanks v. 45 - Walking on the water; Calmed the storm
He was the master over matter. He could actually do so
We can turn matter into energy but not energy into matter
Jesus made everything. He has power over nature.
v. 52 - *"They did not gain insight over the loaves"*
Understand who you are dealing with! He holds it all together.

* USC PhD. colleague - Water into wine heat in pots.

He could probably handle the heat.

The early apostles believed the physical cosmos belonged to Christ and was totally at His disposal because they had seen his power over nature and death. He was resurrected.

* Atheist Professor, "Resurrection - That's contrary to the laws of physics?"

Willard, "Which laws of physics?" There aren't any. Physics does not deal with reality as a whole but physical reality and even that from a particular point of view. Often in general terms that something has been found out to prove that God does not exist. Nothing has been found out that has disproved the reality of God. Show me where in the science book it shows.

We have to keep that in mind. When we are talking about the Kingdom of God, we have to know we are talking about reality. It is a field of energy and it does work. The Word that God spoke is power beyond any comprehension and that power is still working.

2. His Riches: the Master of the Moral Life [54:10] [CHARACTER: GOODNESS - VIRTUE - RIGHTEOUSNESS]

Jesus understands moral reality and order and able to bring people to moral goodness. He doesn't just talk about it, He knows how it works.

Matthew 5:20 - *"Unless you exceed Pharisees righteousness, you can't make contact with the Kingdom of the Heavens."*

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All the parts of the self being permeated with agape love - body, soul, social relations, mind (thoughts/feelings), your will all set in love. To do that you'll have to be in touch with something that enables you to do it. If you're not going to move to that level, you can't contact what will enable you to do it. This needs the power of agape in you

Scribes & Pharisees - Not what you do, or more importantly, what you don't do
Thou Shall not Kill - "Sex & Violence" addressed by Jesus

Anger & Contempt - Why did Jesus start there? Because He knew anger & contempt are the root of murder. Be careful whom you "dis".

Language used to kill - "I wasted them" - contempt for someone

Jesus understands it is rooted in self will that is thwarted & frustrated gives rise to murderous rage. Instead of not killing people, let's talk about not being governed by anger - the root of the situation. That's why Jesus is the master of the moral world.

* If you're going to the right destination (airport), all will be taken care of

If you don't have the wrong stuff on the inside, you don't have to worry about not killing someone. You're not that kind of person.

James - *"If you hate your brother, you already are a murderer in your heart"*
You want to get the murder out of the heart.

Adultery

[1:00:50]

Not in to cultivating lusting, you won't be in trouble with adultery

Thought, Temptation & Deed

You don't try to **not** do what is wrong

You don't go there because (deed) because your not in Temptation

To stay out of temptation, you have to deal with the heart

Plato, Aristotle, Epicureans - *How to Lead a Good Life, Be a Good Person*

The early thinkers totally failed on bringing people to moral goodness.

Republic - One of the most beautiful books. The study of the human soul

How can we train people so their soul works as it should?

The good person is one w/the balanced soul - Reason, Appetites & Emotion

"When emotions align with reason to govern the appetites"

Educate the people who are able to reason to get emotions in order to handle the appetites.

Aristotle - **Legislation**: Organized government to establish institutions that will shape souls that are good. It didn't work. Greeks invited the Romans in to stop killing one another.

~ Epicureans striving to get a hold of moral reality but they could not.

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That's why the Christian teaching of Christians won the hearts of the ancient world. Presented the beauty of Christ and the goodness of Christ and showed people to actually do it.

Moral education is a not entity. In High School, kids hit a moral wilderness or a moral sewer and nothing is taught to them except a brand of secular legalism.

The track record of the Christian church makes clear the way of being a genuine person by following the way of Christ and His teachings.

If you had a pill to remove unkindness, would you take it?
If there was an operation to remove your anger, would you do it?
Operation to make it impossible to lie?

Jesus Christ stands for a purity of life that most people would be hesitant to embrace.

* Business Ethics is not business ethics but how to stay out of trouble.

The one thing you will not see teaching on how I can use my professional status to be a good person. That's really the only issue. If you're not interested in being a good person, when the pressure comes down, you'll be able to find ways of avoiding the regulations. The the failure that's implicit in all forms of legalism.

Jesus knew that. That's why Jesus doesn't deal with actions. He understands the order in the moral life and you have to bering people to moral goodness through repentance for what they have done.

* 12 Steps - Confession, Forgiveness & Repentance

The church should have been helping but could not help AA because of it was caught up in self righteousness. They did not want to deal with people who were dealing wit alcohol. What about the people Jesus hung out with?

What about the people hung out with? Many churches in America have gone down the drain because they neighborhood has changed and they don't want to minister to the people living right under their windows. There are plenty of people to fill the churches. If all the churches & synagogues were filled, we'd reach 3-5%. We're not short on people in need. We need to minister to the ones who are there. That was Jesus' way. He didn't sort out saying this is not the kind that we want. He took people where they were. That was part of his moral vision and that's why people were drawn to Him. ["You're just like me but you're on to something"]

3. His Riches: Glorious Future of the Individual Human [1:13:25]

[CALLING]

Luke 12 (Matthew 6)

Phil 4:6ff - *"Anxious for nothing...Let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God will set a guard around your hearts and minds...Peace beyond understanding."*

"What you seen in me, do those things & the God of peace will be with you"

Mt. 18:10 - Caring Provision - God assigns angels to attend to each child

He has individuals to see to it that they are cared for in the Kingdom of God, this side of death or the other. He not only takes care of sparrows, he takes care of children. How can this be when you see what happens to them in this world? No matter what happens to them in this world, the goodness of God sees to it that those children continue to exist in conditions that makes them thankful to no matter what happens to them. You have to go beyond death.

John 8:51-52 - Freedom from **Death**

Are the riches of Christ so great to include that?

The Gold Cord by Amy Carmichael [1:18:30-1:21:50]

"Three Tender Mercies"

* Story of a Lala - a child's joyous passing

What's **death** going to be like?

You won't know that you have died until much later

If you're planning on seeing death give up. You won't.

That is the basis upon which the early church understood Jesus had abolished death.

II Timothy 1:10 - Jesus destroyed death and brought life & immortality

4. His Riches - The Future of the Created Cosmos [CAPACITY] [1:23:45]

The incredible beauty and greatness of the cosmos will never pass away. It is not a self contained system. It is sustained by the power of God. Astronomers tell us that 92%+/- is cold, dark, matter. They have no reason to believe in dark matter except it will explain how the Universe that is visible, warm, light matter behaves. The truth is we know almost nothing about the ultimate nature of the physical universe. I want to suggest to you that the cold, dark matter which explains the behavior of the physical universe is actually God. This is the Jesus who upholds all things by the word of His power.

You say, "How do you know that?" I'm open to anything that can be scientifically demonstrated. We have to go at it through the laws that can be discerned from the behavior of the things we can observe. No one is able to explain why we have the laws we do. Any cosmologist will tell you that. If they can explain the laws we do have, they would never be able explain the origin or the initial condition in which the laws begin to apply.

The greatness and beauty and the future of the Universe is secure and it will get greater and greater. I say that because I believe in the God who made the Universe because He has intruded on this Universe in the form of Jesus Christ.

There will be a New Heaven and New Earth and New Jerusalem (**Rev. 21**). The one we have is in pretty bad shape. Look at Revelation 21 and following.

The Ultimate Questions that face Human Beings [1:27:50]
[Session 6 - 17:50ff (p. 54) Session 7 - Q's #1-3 - 0:00-34:00 (p. 59)]

#1 - What is Reality?

Knowledge and truth help us come to terms with reality. Being Christ's people means we affirm the reality of the Kingdom of God. What is reality?

Answer - **God and everything that comes from His hand.**

#2 - Who is well off? Who has the good life? Who is Blessed?

Answer - **Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God.**

What about the poor? He said Blessed are the poor, for they too can have the Kingdom of God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, people who have no religion going for them. They are poor in spirit like His apostles. He chose people like that to make His messengers to the world. It is certainly because He did not want anyone to take a human fix from the world. He wanted people to understand the cure for the world is life in the Kingdom of God.

#3 - Who is a really Good Person?

Answer - **Anyone permeated with agape love**

Love is comes forward out of the nature of God, brought to human beings, Christ shows you how to realize it, what it is and then finally...

#4 - How do you become a really good person?

Answer - **Becoming a disciple of Jesus**

Jesus answers each of these far superior than anyone else. Just compare.

* Peter, "To whom shall we go?" (That is a real question isn't it.)

People in LA, Manilla, Bombay have the exact same questions.

How does Christ compare to Krishna? Budda? L. Ron Hubbard?

Our Task - Preach the Unsearchable Riches of Jesus [1:32:15]

One Mistake we can make? Fail to present Jesus Christ adequately.

If we present Jesus adequately, what can be done for human beings will be done. If not, he is an early advocate for the Democratic way of life. He is a gentle cynic of the Jesus Seminar. If he is just a sacrifice for sin, you will also fail to present the **Unsearchable Riches of Christ**. Except in a world which is keyed to the issue of the forgiveness of sins, the message you present will fail to make disciples.

Does the gospel I preach have a natural tendency to produce disciples to Jesus Christ or does it just produce more consumers of religious goods and services? [1:34:05]

We have a nonparticipant spectator, consumer version of Christianity in this country. That's why people go from church to church to find a better service to consume. Not rooted in the body of Christ. Not focused on discipleship and personal transformation. Not focused on living in the power of God in a way that you can bring to bear where you can stand as Christ's person and expect the Kingdom of God to make a difference you yourself could never make if your life depended upon it. [1:35:00]

You have to start with ground zero planning. We have to think about the job to be done without regard to the people who are already on the grounds and looking out for them to make sure they turn out right.

What is the Job to be Done? - The Great Commission [1:37:00]

They had really taken a beating. They hitched their wagon to a star and their star went and He got himself crucified. The word was out on them. They had been hiding in the bushes. He has his last meeting with them. He says,

"I have been given say over everything over Heaven and Earth."

That's Kingship.

"As you go, make disciples." We're talking about "Ground Zero Planning".

1) The first thing we are going to do is to make disciples.
2) As we make disciples, they are going to be brought into the Trinitarian presence. Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Immerse them in the Trinitarian reality. When these disciples come together what's happening is not a program they are putting on. They are not doing a performance. They are watching for the hand of God to move in their midst.

3) Last Stage - Teach them to do everything Jesus said.

He book ends it with "I am with you every minute until the job is done."

Starts with "I have say over everything." Ends with, "I am with you every minute." In between is the plan. I have given you Jesus' plan for Church growth. It is the most successful plan for any kind of growth.

[1:39:30]

If we preach the unsearchable riches of Christ rightly, we are ready to move into that plan. If we do not, we can never go there and we will have to do something else. That is the history of the church, very largely doing something else. You go down through the ages and watch the ebb and the flow and you come up to the present and say what are we doing today.

Other Perspectives of Reality

[1:40:30]

Buddhism - It's escaping the wheel of birth and death. You would stop existing and never come back. You cease to exist as an independently existing thing. It's not a life affirming teaching, it's a life denying teaching. Object is to abolish desire. How you escape desire is the question. This is an awful place. The world is an illusion. You are an illusion. Compare Buddhism at its best with Christian culture at its best. All at their worst are equally bad at the worst end. Look at the good end and they are not equally good. Compare what Christ has been and He is far above the others. If I'm wrong, show me.

Evidence

[1:44:20]

- 1) Reality of Christ both before and after His resurrection.
- 2) The reality of the Kingdom as experimentally known through finding what God is doing, on that assumption getting involved and see what the reality of it is.

[1:46:15]

If you can find a better way, he would be the first to say to you, "take it." You can't imagine Jesus saying, "Well, it's good but it's not Christian." If you don't believe that, you can't follow two steps. You know that he is on the side of truth, what is established, what's reason, what is factual.

The secular system knows they have no way to prove that they have an authority to get away with it. Carl Sagan's series has all these falsehoods in it, unfounded claims.

We need ordinary people to do this. Just follow the argument. God is on your side.

The curse of our land is that we have all these uneducated people with higher degrees. That has to do with the authority structure we live in. It has nothing to do with Truth and Knowledge. Listen to Phil Johnson at Berkeley. There are specialists who are doing the work. They can show you there is not a good argument on the other side.

[1:50:10]

Do the work as a Christian. Follow out the teachings of your Scripture because your Scripture is a profound book of knowledge. If you treat it as a book where you go to prove that your traditions are right, you'll come back empty. Frankly most of our traditions have no foundation, they are just stuff that has grown up. "The vain traditions of our fathers." (Peter)

Most of our denominations were born out of negativity - Protestants. You're known for protesting. Get to Heaven and say, "God, I protested!"

Go to the scriptures to see what is positively taught about life and reality and put it to the test. That gets us back to "Ground Zero planning". Now we're going to do something **following Jesus Christ as if there was no one already there that had to be justified for what they are doing.**

*** The Educational System**

[1:51:40]

If you set out to devise an educational system, you would never come up with the one we've got. This is not "Ground Zero Planning". The main thing you have to do is to take care of people who are already in the game.

You can't go at Christianity that way. If you'll do your ground zero planning, it will do the best thing you can for the people who (Christians) are already in the game. Many are good people, sincere people who want to follow Christ. But they are hindered by taking care of a lot of stuff that is irrelevant.

The one of beauties of the Great commission is that it strips all of that away.

What are you going to do? Just do what it says!

~ ~ ~ END of Session 4 - 1:53:00 ~ ~ ~

The Central Issue of our Work - *What is Salvation?*

1.) Public Appearance of Salvation to All

Titus 2:11-3:7 (ASV) *"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*

Being lost is not where you are going, it is where you are. A lost person does not know where they are. Can not locate where you are on a map. This is condition of lostness.

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 2:11-3:7 is a good picture of what salvation means in the New Testament.

Emphasis on New Life - Regeneration; to be "Born from above"

Life is a kind of activity that is self initiating, self directing from the inside.

Life in Christ is a new kind of activity where Jesus is Lord.

2.) A New Life

[5:25]

Life comes from the inside

[6:25] Acknowledging Jesus is Lord by the Holy Spirit - I Co. 12:2 (?)

He is in charge of the Universe. He is the Maestro of life. He has power to supervise & govern in His kingdom.

To really see that you can not do this on your own but from God. Faith is a gift of God not our own. This new project will eliminate boasting. No pride in this new life. Everything good has been given to us. We have to work through this carefully.

One of the reasons we are in this non-Disciple Christianity: We have mistaken grace for passivity.

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Come to your church and say, "Do it to me". "Thrill me with your worship service. Enliven me with your word. I'm here to consume. So you lay the goods on the table. If you don't, I'll go elsewhere where they lay better goods on the table."

The passivity has generated a culture of consumer Christians. Being a Christian is a matter of consuming. They consume the merits of Christ. They consume services. They consume ministers.

They think their job is to consume. They don't realize they are called to participate so they can live the new life out.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God & Discipleship to Christ [09:30]

Universal assumption is that you can be a Christian without being a Disciple.

There is no church that says, "You can't be a Christian without being a Disciple."

* In School, you don't have to believe what you write. Can be right even if you guess. Even true in seminary. Is that true in our churches?

The Church doesn't need more people, \$, influence, education. Never. The basic need is for the transformation of the people who are there. Our problem is the quality of the people who are there.

* In my early ministry I realized I was not really helping people to change. It's not their fault. Southern Baptist can't get saved again but they can rededicate themselves. It slowly dawned on me I'm not saying anything to help these people change.

What are we teaching people that leaves us in this situation?

Is "Lordship" in practice not just a doctrine? Am I saying, "I am His disciple"?

The Loss of the Meaning of "Disciple" [15:30]

A. Discipleship Confused with Evangelism

"Spiritual Formation" arose because disciple became flabby & displaced.

* Navigators as the most recognized "Discipling" Ministry formerly stated:
"Christians are in three classes"

1. Just Christians

2. Disciples - People who could make Christians - Soul winners

3. Workers - People who could make Disciples

{*"I don't have time to tell you all the things I don't mean by that."*}

Navigators realized they were producing people who were not Christlike.

True Disciple - Full time student in the Kingdom of God

B. Discipleship Confused with Social Action

* Sojourners Magazine - Service to the Poor, Political Action, Protesting, Government Opposition = "*Speaking truth to power*"

C. Discipleship Confused with Church Involvement [21:55]

These don't come to transformation into Christlikeness to be what it's supposed to be and do what the church is supposed to do transformation of people in the world coming to Christlikeness...people progressing to the place where they routinely and easily do the things Jesus talked about.

*** I like to say, People who are "Blessing those who curse (dis) you."**

We're not making an issue of actually doing what Jesus said. Most of our groups have an emphasis on particular things Jesus said but not all of them.

—> **The Great Commission - Three Parts** [24:25]

Part 1 - Make Disciples in the Gospel of the Kingdom

[["Church Priority #2 - Means to Make Disciples" Session 9 @ 1:05:15 \(p. 81\)](#)]

A.) The first step - to **Be a Disciple - FOLLOW Jesus**

So important for us to know what a "Disciple" is. If we are going to make disciples, surely the first step is to be a disciple. That step if we omit that, nothing else will go quite right. We will have people not committed to learning.

* Committed to learning Algebra [don't commit, won't learn]

Get people to the place where they see what is presented as "The Pearl of Great Price", "Treasure in the Field" so they will say Yes this is the most important thing and "Seek First the Kingdom of God".

Imagine groups of people [families] who acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus where the whole purpose was to learn from Him. You have people who are ready for a different kind of operation to go on around them.

* A student who really wants to learn Algebra will do it and learn it.

B.) Make Disciples is to **Form Intentions - FUEL Obedience to Jesus**

* You can learn how to spell C-A-T. Being able to bless those who curse you is just like that. If you don't do the things that will bring you there, it won't happen. You can not learn how to spell "C-A-T" by grace.

Grace will not force you to become the kind of person who "easily & routinely" blesses those who curse them.

[[Grace invites not demands](#)]

—>That is fundamental truth about this whole business of discipleship. [29:45]

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If I am not a person who easily and routinely turns away from [sin], it isn't because of the law of gravity. It is because I don't intend to become that kind of person.

Serious Call to a Devout & Holy Life by William Law, Ch. 2 [30:45]

This is the missing link. When we are talking about making disciples, we are talking about making people who actually **intend** to do it.

* Algebra class - you should intend to learn how to solve equations

Algebra students - They don't know what they are there for.

"Just give me the units" and that's why they do so badly

* In our culture (USC), we have group therapy for Math Phobia

If you just want the job, the grade, you don't want to learn it.

The key is generating intention - and that is what Discipleship is about

C. Make Disciples by ravishing them with the Kingdom - **FOCUS on Jesus**

It's amazing how little we hear about Jesus in our churches. Help them understand about **the greatness of Jesus** and what He is doing. He is often presented in a very narrow perspective. He is just Savior & Judge. Present Christ. Lift Him up in all of His glory and with Him the Kingdom comes because **He is a great King**.

"The Unfathomable Riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8)

Go to people and ask them, *"How are you doing with your kingdom?"*

Help them be responsible for their lives. Help them understand who Jesus is. Self will is not bad until we exalt it to the top position. We all have a Kingdom that we bring with us to each moment and gathering

* Breakdown of kingdoms in families

"Hearts of Fathers to Children" [37:10]

These are kingdoms that are broken. Then we bring people to Jesus and see life in His Kingdom. That's how we make disciples.

"Look, this is your greatest opportunity in life."

Part 2 - Immerse Disciples in the Trinity [38:00]

—> **Church services are a primary problem in this whole project**

Getting nice people together in a building seated in rows and talking to them was working. Now what do we do?

Then a whole new groups started up - Calvary Chapel, Vineyard, etc.

The problem of discipleship remains an issue across the board.

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The temptation to program differently we need to avoid.
Focus on the 2nd clause in the Great Commission is the key - the Trinity
Get off the focus on the program and performance
Doesn't matter much what you do by way of programming
As long as you honor the Trinity, the Trinity will come.

You have to have Disciples who honor Jesus as Lord. Prepared to love one another; Invoking the presence of God over the whole thing. It will happen. It has happened in church history.

The fact that God blesses something does not mean He approves it entirely.

Part 3 - Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded [43:25]

If you have Disciples living in the presence of the Trinitarian life that flows in community of disciples of Jesus, then you can now teach them to do everything Jesus said. That is how discipleship in the gospel of the Kingdom comes together.

If you don't preach a whole life gospel or you'll never make disciples.

I use the word "Kingdom". Don't be legalistic about the language.

The point - Living now within the range of God's effective will in our whole life not religious things we do that and non-religious we do on our own.

Discipleship: Move from running our own Kingdom and bringing increasingly our whole self into the kingdom of God often one step & part at a time

* Heart, Mind, Body, Emotions, Social & Soul

[FOLLOW ("Make Disciples") - THREE ("Immerse") - ACT ("Obey")]

—> **What is a Disciple?** [2 key questions] [45:40]

1.) A Disciple is one who is with Jesus and learning to be like Him

Prepared to invoke Him, invite Him and as you do that, you are going to experience His presence but not in our own strength. Discipleship is not something to be done merely by Human effort but one living in the Trinitarian presence. That is the meaning of the teaching of grace we receive from the Scriptures. Grace means we can't do that on your own. You don't have to. We are with Jesus. We experiencing Him acting with us.

* Carrying a log on our own when someone else carries it with you.

[* Spotting in weight lifting = grace]

We are constantly tempted to do things we can not do. That is standard with the life of grace. The fact that you can not do something has nothing to do with the case. The question is, "Does God want it done?" Will I start lifting it knowing I can't on lift it on my own and start lifting.

Isaiah 63:12, "God's glorious arm went at the right hand of Moses."

Moses learned baby lessons by the bush:

- * Staff to Snake - Picking up serpents is a challenge to your faith
- * Leprosy/Clean - We are with Jesus learning to do things.

2.) A disciple is interactive with Jesus. [51:15]

"Now this is eternal life: that they would know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." **John 17:3**

"Knowing" always refers to interactive relationship.

I never go into a situation where I assume I'm in control of the outcome.

If I have to do something that I can't do, I won't assume it can't be done. If I think know what's supposed to happen, I don't think that it will happen that way. I try to never assume what will happen. Sometimes I assert my Kingdom when I start acting like I'm in charge. It would be very foolish of me to assume I know what's supposed to happen. I have ideas, hopes and plans that are always held in abeyance with the idea that Jesus knows what supposed to happen. [53:20]

I am very hopeful a lot of things happen that I don't even think about.

Ephesians 3:20,

"Exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask or think..."

3.) A Disciple lets Him lead. [54:20]

I'm learning from Him how to lead my life as He would lead my life if He were I. My life is the interest here. He led His life. Now I lead my life. I have to get concrete about that. The very kind of person I am is my life. Jesus could lead it.

- * Jesus leading a lady's life. He could do that.
- * Lawyers & Bankers are hardest to help think Jesus could do their role.

Any work that is important for others can be done in a spirit of love and in the power of the Kingdom. I'm an Apprentice in Kingdom Living.

He is the Master of living in the Kingdom. It's the easy way of living.

Learn of me. (**Matthew 11:28-30**)

- * Yoke with a young horse and experienced horse.
- * "They don't pay us to live, they pay us to preach."
Held to performance.

What Jesus is talking about is transformation!

—> **The Gospel heard does not produce Disciples** [1:00:40]

Where is the problem? The central problem is the message preached or at least the one that is heard. The message they hear about the Kingdom of God is about going to Heaven when they die. It's a real feat to succeed in getting through. The message heard does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples.

~ **"Lordship Salvation"** (John MacArthur) does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples either. (*The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 2)

The bitter truth - your system is perfectly designed to produce the result you are getting. If you want a different result, you have to change the system. We have to find the place of change.

~ **"Non-Lordship Salvation"** (Charles Ryrie in response to MacArthur) "The issue is - How can my sins be forgiven? "Eternal life" means "Heaven when I die." *"The answer is sin."* (He doesn't mean "sin", he means "guilt".)

The issue - Does Jesus remove sin and/or guilt. Some say removes only guilt.

"Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil." (Matthew) Is that just guilt?

"He came to save people from their sins." (Not from guilt.) Ryrie means guilt.

[Grace is the power for not just for past guilt of sin but present grip of sin.]

"I can be fully assured of going to Heaven." (Ryrie)

Ryrie separates issues of Christian life from Salvation. (p. 74) You can reject the issues of Christian life (teaching) and still be saved (atonement).

"His death paid for all your sins is the way the gospel is often presented is just one theory of the atonement that by "Believing" taps His resources in the bank of Heaven to transfer His merit so your debts are paid off. Ryrie says, "When one believes, He commits his eternal destiny to God not his years of life on Earth. I do not need to settle issues that belong to Christian living in order to be saved."

Ryrie is driven by "Salvation by Grace". When he thinks about this life, he thinks "works".

- This is where Lordship Salvation and non-Lordship salvation join the issues.

—> **Gospels Heard Today in Churches (4)** [1:10:20]

1. Forgiveness Centered (Ryrie)

Good news is entirely about forgiveness. The beating you deserve has been taken by someone else. If you believe it has, then you won't get that beating. Your sins will be forgiven and you'll be in Heaven because they won't find any reason to keep you out if you believe Jesus suffered your payment.

This is the standard version of the gospel you will hear.

* Charles Stanley, Rogers - Bellview, Memphis

It leaves people unconnected to Christian living.

Reformed Tradition - You'll be so grateful, you'll obey. But they don't.

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- Forgiveness received in Luther & Calvin's days was such a huge issue, when people received it, their lives were totally transformed. That would be wonderful if it did happen but it just doesn't happen because of the way things have developed up to the present point.

2. Liberation Centered

Jesus died to liberate the oppressed and you can stand with Him in the battle. They don't say much of anything about forgiveness of sins. * *Sojourners Magazine*

Is oppression bad? Did Jesus talk about oppression? He sure did. It sure is and we should be opposed to it.

Is forgiveness essential? Yes, it sure is. Reconciliation & Justification.

[Dallas Willard's view] In my own view I think it is right to think REGENERATION comes first, then JUSTIFICATION, then SANCTIFICATION, then GLORIFICATION. A natural progression along a continuous line. The way it is often presented now is that Justification is the whole deal, no one makes much sense of regeneration and there is no natural progression to sanctification because of the way this is presented.

3. Church Centered Gospel

Do what your church says and it will see to it you will be received by God. Take care of your church and it will take care of you.

* Sacramental Churches present this gospel. Rituals, etc.

That is looking more to heaven when you die. #3 has more in common with #1 than #2.

As you think about it, it has to be scriptural. If it isn't in the scripture, you don't do it. That goes back to where do we get knowledge? Scripture is the place that God has deposited in public way the knowledge we need to have eternal life...and I don't mean go to Heaven when we die, thought that will take care of itself.

These are all Gospels of **Sin Management** - what are you going to do about sin - they are not gospels of REGENERATION and new life now in the present Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Heavens under the living Lord Jesus Christ.

It is often presented as if we had never sinned we would have no use for Christ.

GRACE - Is the gospel only what to do about sin? Grace is often taught as only for guilt. This misunderstands Grace. Go to your Bibles and do thorough, inductive study of grace. You have to think of yourself in presenting Christ to the world, *is it primarily or only a problem about what to do about sin?*

4. True Gospel

Put your confidence in Jesus and live with Him as His disciple now in the present Kingdom of God.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 5 [1:18:56]** ~ ~ ~

The Gospel of the Kingdom

So what is the gospel? The gospel is you can trust Jesus. That's it. That's the simplest form of the gospel.

But not something he said about social evils. Not something he did to secure your forgiveness. That's all in there. But those are not the gospel. The gospel is Jesus. His availability. Put your confidence in him. Come under the rule of God. God at work in your life.

Life of coherence

Now see, all of us have this in bits and pieces at least. But there is a coherent whole here, of finding our life in the Kingdom of God. And, we've talked about Matthew 4:17; we've talked about Matthew 6:33.

Romans 8:1-14 - *"Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit"* [00:01:15]

I haven't said much about Romans 8:1-14. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God did by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..."

And showed up sin for what it was. Right. And the result of that is those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, see they have deliverance over sin. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now then you have to settle in your thinking, is that imputed righteousness, or is it also imparted righteousness? The Ryrie way of setting it up is, that's imputed. We fulfill the law because we trust Jesus who died to pay off our sins, and we owe nothing to the law. That's the way that's read.

Life of the Spirit

You read it that way, you can't make any sense of what follows, in Romans 8. Because **Romans 8** is not talking about forgiveness of sins. It's talking about life.

It goes on to say - it goes on to contrast the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit. They that live in terms of the flesh, it's hard to translate prepositions like kata, but it - I think if you put it in terms of, they that live in terms of the flesh, verse 5. Those who are according to the flesh, my version says. But who live in terms of the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh.

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That is to say, that's what they think in terms of. Flesh here is what you can do in your natural human abilities. You individually and you socially. That would mean that you would look in your planning of your churches and your own life, you would simply expect things from natural sources, and that would be all. Those who are, who live in terms of the Spirit, kata, they mind the things of the Spirit. If your mind is set on the flesh, the outcome is death. The mind set on the Spirit, life and peace. And he goes on to develop that you see. It's talking about life.

John 3:16

[4:00]

John 3 is not a forgiveness passage. John 3:16 is not about forgiveness. It includes forgiveness, but it's about life from above.

This is one of the most shocking things that I often say to people; it's because they always thought in terms of John 3:16 meaning forgiveness. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever put their confidence in him would not perish... go to hell, ...but have eternal life... go to heaven. Right.

Now, if you read the passage you'll see it's not about forgiveness; it's about life from above. That means that John 3:16 is not just about what happens after you die, but what happens while you're alive. The life you lead will be an eternal one; that means that the things that you do - go tie it in with the Romans passage - will be of the Spirit, and therefore will not be perishing. Will not be death.

The mind of the flesh is death. Why? Because it puts its focus on, it involves its life entirely with the things that are natural. And so, we often wonder if God didn't exist, would our church be any different. And if it's simply a human operation, the answer is it wouldn't be. Because, people would do the things that are needed.

So, I just invite you to take these kinds of verses...I mean, you just pile them up. An inductive Bible study is what you need to do. You take the words you're focusing on; you study them through the Scripture; you get the context. So now here's the some...

Salvation in the Kingdom

[6:15]

Here's what salvation is on this view. And since that's, that's the really big deal, try this on. Try it on in your life, in your ministry, and above all in your study of Scripture.

Salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on Earth. Of course that involves forgiveness, and heaven afterwards. It's not a question of omitting those. It's a question of making that the whole deal, see.

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So now, do hang on that Colossians 1. **Colossians 3:1-4**. If you then be risen with Christ, see, that means participating now in the life that Jesus is now living on earth. If you then be risen with Christ, seek then those things that are above. So, you don't become passive; you become active.

Seek those things that are above. Now, above doesn't mean beyond the moon. It means where God is acting in the first heaven, and beyond that of course, where Jesus is on the right hand of the Father. Now he manages to do that and be here as well, all right. *Seek those things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of the Father. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth. Because you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. See. That's now.*

A Hidden Life

[7:40]

So now, you have to bring that together with the theme of the divine conspiracy, because this is a hidden life. Now, go back to John 3. What did Jesus say about those that are born of the Spirit? Precisely that they have a hidden life, which is the real thing that is going on in them. Now, that hidden life will manifest itself in great transformations, not just of character, but if you like signs and wonders language, it will certainly show up there too.

Now the onlooker will not know what's going on. That's what Jesus said to Nicodemus, wasn't it. The wind blows where it lists. You hear the sound; you don't see it. You see its effects, you perceive its effects, and that will also be true. (John 3:8)

But now here's the crucial point for the understanding of the divine conspiracy. A person who wants to explain them in some other way will do that to their satisfaction. And that is a part of what God has in mind with the whole process of things here on earth, is to allow people who wish to go another way, to go another way.

But to allow people who wish to know him to find him. Because the promise, as you recall, in Jeremiah, is that, You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Right. **(Jeremiah 29:13) [Proverbs 8:17]**

So God is present. God is present in you. He's present in the people of Christ. The salvation that is running, that we're a part of now, is one that actually is there for anyone who wishes to seek and to find it.

A Wonderful man named Bill Craig

[9:45]

I don't know if you know him, but he's - and Bill is from a more Reformed position. At one point, he got worked up about John Wimber, and thought he should... But Bill is a wonderful, loving man, and while he can disagree with someone, he can also be open. And he...

This was many years ago, 1988, Bill sent out a prayer letter, where on - we received them. And he's talking about power evangelism. And power healing. And he has theological disagreements with John Wimber, and that's OK. John Wimber would never have been troubled about that at all. A man of incredible and irenic Christlike spirit, and he would understand. And here's what happened.

Bill Craig - he's writing this from Belgium I think it was. Even if we do not have the gifts of healing, because he's one who had trouble with the idea of gifts, we can pray for the sick. Interestingly, that's of course also true of John MacArthur, who has trouble with gifts, but still believes in miracles, and in prayer.

Bill says, "When I returned from our first conference back in November, my thoughts kept turning to a young woman here, in Belgium, named Sue Cooper, who had been recently stricken with multiple sclerosis. It was a terrible tragedy, and the question kept forcing itself, why don't you, to Bill, why don't you lay hands on Sue Cooper and pray for her healing. When I shared about the conference with my Sunday School class, Sue, who was in the class, said Why don't you pray for me. So I did something I wouldn't have done before. That is, before reading Wimber's books and hearing him teach."

"I invited Sue to stand in the center of the room, and the others in the class to lay hands on her and pray . Pray for her healing. Nothing extraordinary happened. But Sue was grateful, and we continued with the lesson. After a couple of months, the Coopers moved back to the United States, and Sue was pretty resigned to the fact that she wouldn't be healed. But now we received word from her that her doctors can find no trace of MS in her body at all. And the doctors said that she should no longer say that she has multiple sclerosis."

Well. What do you know? What do you know?

We are participating in a life that really moves with us. That's what we are learning as disciples. Faith in Jesus means that we have confidence in Him for everything.

Not just his social teachings or that He hates people who are in power or are rich, that He wants to cut them down and send them to Hell. Luke 6 looks like it.

Not just something He did, even suffering for us. That is not discipleship.

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Faith in Jesus the whole person. I have confidence in Him for everything. Everything He said about life and death is right. Everything He said is good of us. Life, death, everything in life. Discipleship is not bad news.

Someone says, "I understand you have to give up everything. Hate your mother, father...your own life." Sounds awful, doesn't it? That's the other side of the parable of the pearl of great price. You have to count the cost to be a disciple. You don't just look at what you pay. You also look at what you get.

* Buying a car - count the cost, not just what you pay but what you get and what you pay, and what will happen if you don't buy the car.

The Cost of Discipleship - No-one knows the cost of discipleship who does not understand the cost of non-discipleship. How about you writing a book on *The Cost of Non-Discipleship*? Spend the rest of your life being dominated by hatred and lust. Does that sound good? If you have your wits about you, you'll realize that's worth getting rid of. How about living a life full of love, joy, hope, peace, confidence in God. If you don't have discipleship, you don't get that.

What is the Gospel?

[16:55]

The good news that we can live now in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ means I have confidence in Him for everything. I want to be as close to him as possible and learn from Him everything I can. I do believe that all of His commandments are for my benefit. Anything He tells me to do is for my good. I will be much better off when I do it.

—> You can only understand that if you get the background of the Kingdom.

The Ultimate Questions that Face Human Beings

[17:50]

[[Session 4 1:27:50-1:37:00 \(p.37\)](#) [Q's #1-3 - Session 7 0:00-34:00 \(p. 60\)](#)]

1. What is reality?
2. Who is well off?
3. Who is a good person?
4. How do you become a good person?

This is a framework for genuine witnessing for Christ. If you want to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, bring those questions to the minds of people. That's what all the philosophers and thinkers tried to answer through the ages. I use these questions in my philosophy classes at USC. That's what we want to keep before the people we teach in our fellowship and that's what we want to bring to the people not in our fellowship in the witness of the Kingdom.

Why don't we hear the gospel of the kingdom?

[19:15]

"I honestly can not remember any pastor preaching a sermon on the Kingdom of God. I myself have never preached a sermon on it. Where has the kingdom been?" Peter Wagner (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 59)

The Kingdom - Emphasis on whole life involvement with Jesus as Lord.

Areas of Discipleship (3)

[22:10]

We have to developed this later [See Session 9 1:05:15]

#1 - Learning to do what Jesus said.

- Becoming the kind of person who would naturally do them. The focus is on changing the stuff that is in those Circles of a Whole Person. [6 Dimensions]

* Blessing those who curse you. The stuff inside always pops out before you have time to think before you know what you are doing. The Pharisee always fails because they aim at the action not what's insider the person. These are guidelines to become the kind of person Jesus talks about.

#2 - How to live life in the areas without explicit command

We need guidance to learn to hear the voice of Christ, listen for it and learn to follow. Do the particular work we do with Jesus at our side and to hear his prompting and direction so that life as a whole is lived in the Kingdom includes areas of prudence as well as morality. *"What is the wise thing to do?"*

Colossians 3:16 - The Wisdom of Christ - Word of Christ in all wisdom. Include our business decisions, family financial welfare, all kinds of concerns that have to do with ordinary life that we might not think about with the Bible alone.

#3 - How to act with the power in the Kingdom.

Prayer and Giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life.

We ought always to be undertaking things we can not do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. Always be counting on God to do big things, things we can not do.

* Writing a book or starting a business. Acting in the power of God!

Why is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus is omitted?

[28:20]

Carefully study scripture, read carefully New Testament, the Old Testament to see what is the gospel? One issue in particular comes up over and over - the idea that Jesus preached one gospel and Paul preached another.

{Willard} "I want to tell you there is no such difference." The gospel that Jesus preached and the gospel Paul preached are the same. Walk through the book of Acts and watch how the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus come together. You will see them separate at the beginning and together at the end.

Acts put a face to the Kingdom and a Kingdom to the face.

People did not know what Jesus was talking about when He talked about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:3 - Jesus spoke of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12 - Phillip in Samaria preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. When you invoke the name of Jesus, you can invoke the action of the Kingdom. That's what they had to learn - When you ask and act in the name of Jesus, the Kingdom comes into action.

Colossians 3:17 - "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." [32:00]

The name of Jesus ties in the Kingdom.

At the end of Acts, the face of Jesus has been put on the Kingdom and a Kingdom is presented in terms of the King who is Jesus. A King always brings a kingdom, so they come together.

If you don't start there, things won't clear up. If you don't, you will variably wind up in legalism.

—> **Spirituality without Ontology produces Legalism** [33:15]

Ontology (def.) "*The theory of being; the understanding of reality.*"

It applies not just to God but also to us as human beings. What matters in us is the hidden aspect - the sources of our behavior. We are spiritual beings. That's ontology. When we get the ontology right and the order right in the person, then we are able to escape legalism - Pharisaism. That's why religious people are often so angry and can be very mean. They are focusing on behavior - on faith and practice and they are judging themselves and everyone else in terms of that. It produces mean and contentious Christians. Where does this come from? This comes from the insistence on behavior and right and wrong. Inquisitions, wars, all those things. How could that happen? They try to understand spirituality in terms of explicit behavior or faith in practice or explicit belief.

If we come to Jesus, we have to have beliefs about Him. You can't come to Him any other way. The significance of the belief is not so that we will be identified with having the right answers. Salvation is presented as...

* Like a Driver's test. Miss it and you don't drive (Go to the bad place.)

The significance of faith is not having the right answers,
it is being enmeshed in reality in the way that accords with truth.
When you do that, your life is different.

* Virgin Birth of Christ significance?

- It is not getting right answer but if He was born of a virgin, you've got a different world, now you're going to be relating to Him in a different way.

* Was Christ divine? - If I say that, then I pass the test. God will let me in because I got the right answer. The right answer is not what matters. If I believe that Jesus was uniquely divine, I relate to Him differently than if I relate to Him as a nice man who had historical significance and we ought to be like him.

My belief is designed to integrate my action with reality. That's why it really matters. We seek the Kingdom in Jesus, we come to Him, we began to listen to Him. If the Holy Spirit and Word works the faith in our heart, we say,

"*This is the Son of God. This is equal with God.*"

Now we have a different kind of person that we are relating to. We come to seek the Kingdom in Jesus. We live out the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and we live in uncompromising obedience. We are learning to do that.

Do we have to be perfect? No. Why? We are not accepted on the basis of perfection or performing. We are accepted because our relationship to Jesus. When I go to Heaven, the place of God, they are not going to check the computer to see if all my sins have been paid for. They will see another friend of Jesus coming. A disciple may be very green and very imperfect. What characterizes a disciple is not the level of their perfection. What characterizes a disciple is they are learning and progressing and before very long, they are very different because their inner being has been transformed.

The Inversion of the Two Kingdoms

[39:30]

What the New Testament calls "the World".

Early followers disowned the World, the Flesh & the Devil.

[[Ephesians 2](#), [I John - Eyes, Flesh & Pride](#); [Eve in the Garden of Eden](#)]

The World - Socially organized, historically developing, flesh superintended by the prince of this world Satan whose primary job is to direct the ideas of this world in such a way that people are controlled by a false system of belief. One of its primary components is the way people are ranked.

* "Pecking order of chickens" - ranking who is up and who is down

* Children on a playground - heartbreaking to see it. One of the most brutal places in the world is playgrounds in schools. As you grow up, you get hardened to it. This is where contempt comes in because contempt is tied to the rankings.

Jesus is especially conscious of this and how it is tied to the theology - how human rankings are identified with God's rankings. Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of human ideas about rank and the insistence that God has a different ranking. The statement of Jesus, "*First, last. Last, first.*" What human beings regard as good, respectable, decent, to be applauded, and the people who wind up in those places as being well off, good, respected. The tacit idea here is if you are in those good rankings, that means God is on your side. One of the biggest rankings is wealth and social influence, and the right qualifications.

Philippians 3:4-6 - Again, Paul was one of the first one who "got it."

Paul is talking about his qualifications...regarded as good things.

"Circumcision" was a mark of propriety. If you were, you were in.

Paul was someone "rich in spirit" (unlike the Beatitude "Poor in spirit".)

If you don't have those things, you are a "nobody". You don't exist.

All those things that put me in the upscale pecking order I count as loss.

* Much worse than rubbish. It's dog stuff you step in on the lawn. "Dung"

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You can have all those and not be blessed. You can be blessed and have none. The things that are thought to be up in the human kingdom do not guarantee blessedness.

Rather, what guarantees blessedness is life in the Kingdom of God.

Inversions - Luke 6, Song of Miriam, Hannah's Celebration, Mary's Magnificat
"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God."

Luke 6:20 [49:45]

"How hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God." This passage has confused many people because riches and poverty are such big things for people.. Jesus did not say it was easier for poor people to get in. He does not say if you're rich you can not get in. How difficult to enter if you are rich, not you can get in if you're poor. He took on, "If you are rich, you are in with God."

Jesus says if you're in the Kingdom of God, you are blessed even though you are in those positions. [52:15]

You are equally blessed. You don't suffer by comparison. Is He saying everyone who is poor is saved and going to Heaven when they die? No. Poor people can be just as wicked as rich people. Poor people can be more hung on wealth. They dream it would do things that it can not do. They trust it more sometimes than people who are rich because rich people have found how little it can get you as well as what it can get you. He is not saying everyone who is poor is saved.

* Preachers say if you don't do the Beatitudes, you will not be saved. They miss the whole point of The Beatitudes which is the inversion of kingdoms and the availability of the Kingdom to people who are not up in the world's system and the unavailability to some who are up in human estimation.

I've heard people say if you are rich, you will go to hell.

If you are obsessed with the issue of going to Heaven or Hell, you are going to have a hard time reading the Bible because it isn't always talking about that. If you read "Blessed", "Oh that means saved." It does not mean that. It has something to do with that but that's not what it means.

"Woe be..."

v. 24 - "Woe to you who are rich." If you are rich, you are in trouble.

The Spirit of The Disciplines - Chapter 10 - "Is Poverty Spiritual?"

This is a huge tangle in contemporary thought and life. Huge segments of the church that believes riches are a sign of decadence. You couldn't possibly be rich or powerful and be right with God. God is in favor of poor people over rich people. All sorts of confusion. They do derive from misunderstanding these teachings.

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in relationship to the kingdom of man. [55:40]

Jesus Way of Teaching

[55:55]

Jesus doesn't teach generally by laying out general truths but by contradicting prevailing assumptions causing you to think about that. Putting stingers in and jarring them that they will not have a problem remember it. "*Did you hear what that man said?*" He teaches by questioning prevailing assumptions and practices.

When He says, "Blessed are the poor", He is not saying all poor people are blessed. He is saying, "Your assumption that the rich are blessed is false." Poor people are blessed too. There are rich people who are in real trouble.

—> You have to understand how He teaches or you will get caught up in legalisms.

Luke 14:26 - Jesus, "*Hate Your Mother & Father*" [57:55]

Jesus didn't teach people to hate their parents. He was contradicting a generalization that your Mother & Father should determine what your life - if you respect and love them, you'll do what they say.

* Zebedee, "*These children must hate me. They left me for Jesus.*"

Jesus is not teaching anyone to hate anyone. He did realize that the interpretation of loving which meant that you would simply do what your **PARENTS** said even after you have grown up had to be corrected because parents often misdirect you and you have to have a place to stand in the Kingdom of God to redeem **FAMILY** relations.

Luke 14:7-15 - "*Friend, move up higher*" [59:25]

- Sit at the last place and allow the host to invite you up.

He addresses a general practice by putting a particular case before you.

In reference to the Beatitudes, he is saying contrary to human expectation, the poor are often blessed because the Kingdom of God belongs to them, and the rich are not blessed because they are not in the Kingdom of God.

The meaning of the Beatitudes is to be understood in light of this great inversion, they are primarily the proclamation of the availability of the Kingdom.

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do a thing. Look at the grammar. It's not guarantees of blessedness or un-blessedness.

Two Great Questions: "*Who is well off?*" and "*Who is a good person?*" are answered in the Sermon on the Mount.

[[Session 4 1:27:50-1:37:00 \(p.37\)](#); [Q's #1-3 - Session 7 0:00-34:00 \(p. 59\)](#)]

"Who is well off?" answered in Matthew 5:2-17. He answers it in such a way it is shocking and revolutionary what He has to say to those who are listening,

"*Do not think I have come to destroy the law*". You say that to those who were thinking the because of the shocking proclamation he just made - He just announced those on the un-bless-ables in the human order can be blessed.

Luke - The "will be's" & "Woe be's"

—> The essential message is, "Whosoever will may come." **Romans 10:13**

Matthew 11:11

[1:05:25]

"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Luke 16:16 - *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it."*

Jesus was constantly in trouble associating with the wrong people.

Luke 15 - *Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the Scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*

[1:06:50] **The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus.**

That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus.

You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God.

He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. So He can be with anyone, He can be anywhere. That isn't necessarily always true with us. We have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can, like Him, be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God.

The Prophecy of Daniel

[1:07:45]

Now, just a final word. The prophecy of Daniel. (Daniel 2:35) Why does this upset people so much? Why do we constantly try to go back and civilize the Beatitudes? Why do you have people invest such efforts into how mourning will save you? And how being poor in spirit is really a matter of thinking that you're poor. That's so amusing to watch people try to translate these in ways that will fit into the legalistic mindset of human beings.

And they are disgraceful. They are, they're like the prodigal son. And the older brother is standing there looking with reproach.

You see, this is actually the announcement of the Kingdom that is cut out without hands. The stone that is cut out without hands in Daniel. (Daniel 2:44-24) That comes and crushes human order and fills the whole earth. And that's the eventual outcome of the Kingdom of God. It shakes the foundations in Haggai 2:6-7, so that the things that remain will remain, and those that are not eternal will disappear. It is the kingdoms of the world have become that of our Lord and of his Christ. And that's what puts the hallelujah in the "Hallelujah Chorus", isn't it?

The Gospel and the Meaning of the Beatitudes

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Well now, I know I've raised a lot of questions, and we're going to have time later on to talk about those, so keep those things in mind about the meaning of the Beatitudes, and what it means for the poor in spirit to be blessed, and for the rich to be woe-be'd, and we'll come back to those.

But this is a very essential part of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, because that gospel inverts the natural human orders, or the human orders that we see about us in the wisdom of the world. In our fellowships of disciples, we will not respect the human order, the human pecking order of values.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 6 [1:10:34]** ~ ~ ~

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~ 07 [Kingdom Goodness in the Whole Self](#) [YouTube link] [1:00:53]
{√ - Session 7 is transferred from full transcription}

[3 of 4 of The Ultimate Questions that Face Human Beings]
[\[Session 4 1:27:50-1:37:00 \(p.40\)](#) [Session 6 - 17:50 \(p. 54\)\]](#)

Question #1 - What is reality? - [\[See sessions 5 & 6 "Kingdom & Discipleship\]](#)

Now, remember I said to you there are four great questions. One is what is reality? And we spent I guess more time on that than anything else. And Jesus's answer to that is God and his Kingdom. And everything under that is real. You depart from that, you become increasingly less real.

Question #2 - Who is well off? "Blessed" (*The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 4)

Now then, we've been looking at the question, Who's well off? That's a big question. A lot of people have different answers to it. Want to be very conscious, I think, about how people answer those questions in your work, in yourself, because that will mean the difference often between peace and not-peace for you if you understand where your wellbeing lies, and if you understand that it lies in the Kingdom of God.

See, human beings tend to think their wellbeing lies somewhere else, and so for example, those of us who are in Christian service, fulltime service, often spend a lot of time worrying and wondering about whether or not we're in the right place.

Jacob's dream

And just let me encourage you to think in terms of Jacob - remember Jacob's wonderful story, about how he was this crooked guy who was always cheating somebody out of something? (Genesis 28:10-22) Got in bad trouble, as people tend to do when they live that kind of life, and wound up on the run, and wound up sleeping in a ditch with a stone for a pillow. And if he had worn his cap backwards he could have run faster, maybe made it to the Motel 6 by nightfall.

He wound up in a ditch, and as he slept he had a dream. And the dream was Jacob's ladder. Remember Jacob's ladder? A kind of staircase ascending into heaven. And angels coming and going. Wonderful dream! You remember Jesus said people were going to see that in his case, remember that? They were going to see the heavens open, and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Let me ask you to put yourself in that place, and think about that. The angels ascending and descending on you. When Jacob awoke, you remember he said God

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was in this place, and I did not know it. He said, this is the gateway to heaven. God was in this place, and I did not know it.

God's presence

And it's very important for us to understand that God is where we are. We don't need to be someplace else. Getting someplace else may turn out to be something that will happen, and it can be good. But the truth of the matter is, God is where we are. We do not have to say, Who will ascend into heaven to bring him down? Or, who will go across the sea to bring him? Or who will descend into the depths? The word is nigh thee; it is even in your mouth. It is the word of faith which we preach. (Romans 10:6-8)

So I really want to encourage you to think that. And that God is where you are. And that where you are is the doorway to heaven. Remember heaven doesn't mean what happens after you die, OK. Heaven means the presence of God, the Kingdom of God. It's here.

And it does not matter what you are, who you are, what you've got for you, what's got, you got against you. None of that matters. None. That's the lesson of the Beatitudes. That's what the Beatitudes are about. And you only understand the gospel of the Kingdom of God if there's no limit to who you can go to. To whom you can go, and say blessed. No limit.

Writing Beatitudes

Why don't you write some Beatitudes tonight? If you were to write some Beatitudes with what you know now about the Kingdom of God, what would you write? What would you write? Take a moment and write one. Blessed are the...

Now you're going to put on there somebody that in the human scale is thought to be nothin'. Nobody. Is thought to be someone who is not blessed. Who can you put on your list? Now remember they're not blessed because they're in the condition they're in. They're blessed because the Kingdom is available to them. Hm?

Blessed are the unemployed. Blessed are those who are pregnant too many times. Blessed are those who can't get pregnant at all. Blessed are those who are overemployed, underemployed. Blessed are the fat. Can you do that one? In our culture, that's a big one. Isn't it.

JR: Blessed are those with cell phones.

Dallas: Blessed are those who have cell phones, for they shall be called. [Huge laughter]

JR: How about, blessed are the gamblers for they will become rich - in the Kingdom?

Dallas: If gamblers are considered to be those who are unbleisable, then you could apply that. Remember you're looking for people who are thought to be unbleisable. Maybe those who are addicted to gambling - but now the reason would not be because they're addicted to gambling, remember. The blessing is not in the condition; it's in the Kingdom. Do you understand that? That's the key. That's how it works.

Blessing unbleisables

Now, if you have trouble with going to people who are considered unbleisable and pronouncing their blessing in the Kingdom, then you haven't gotten the message of the Kingdom yet. Because the message of the Kingdom is precisely that all of those that human beings regard as unbleisable are not unbleisable, if they enter into the Kingdom. If they don't, it's another story, because the Beatitudes are all about the Kingdom, and entering into the Kingdom.

So now, that's a radical message, folks, and it will upset most churches if you preach it. Because that will...that would mean that you're breaking down the social barriers, the pecking order, that most people in our churches assume to be valid.

So, now, the New Testament struggles with that; you remember what James for example says about respecting rich people, and dising poor people. (James 2:1-7) You remember that? That goes on in our churches all the time. Who are the nobodies in our churches, and how do they get treated? Is Jesus' way of treating them mean treating them all the same? Is that something that is a part of our teaching and our faith?

So those are huge issues now, and I know that they are, and I don't pretend that I have settled them all, but I do encourage you, if you have a copy of The Divine Conspiracy, at some point, sit down and read chapter four. Just sort of let it come over you, and see what it does for you.

See, the issue of wellbeing is fundamental. Who is well off? That idea is fundamental to human life, because we are responsible for our lives, we have choices to make. We have to know how to relate to God in our world, and we may feel like we are shut out of God, because we are among the unbleisables. And that is where we have to understand the extent and what is contained in that phrase Whosoever will may come. Whosoever will may come, and what that means. *The Sermon on the Mount* deals with the two central questions of the Ultimate Questions that face Human Beings: *Who is well off? Who is a really good person?*

Question #3 - Who is a really good person?

[10:25]

Matthew 5:20 *"Unless your righteousness exceeds the Scribes and Pharisees..."*

Well, let's move on now to the other question of the Sermon on the Mount. Sermon the Mount deals with the two central questions that I listed earlier, when I talked about the four main questions, and those two central questions are, Who's well off? and Who's a good person? So now having... And the first question is primary, because you can't really go on to the second question until you deal with the first one.

But now we want to turn to the second question, which is the question of who is a really good person. So you start with Matthew 5:20, and there Jesus in continuity - and I can't go back and build the bridge here - but I hope you will in your studies; I hope you will build the bridge between **Matthew 19 and 20**, actually between **Matthew 17 and 20**, and make that a part of your faith and your teaching.

But Matthew 20 gives us this startling word. Unless your righteousness...

New righteousness

[11:35]

Now righteousness, "dikaiosune" [Greek term] is not an easy word to translate. Think of it as your goodness. What makes you a really good person. What makes you a really good person, and that is agape love, is constitutes goodness, but... I say to you unless you, your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of the heavens. **(Matthew 5:20)**

Now remember, first, that's not saying you won't go to heaven when you die. It's a different topic. It's talking about entering into an engagement in your life and practice with the kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom of the heavens is the Kingdom of God. That's the phrase that comes out of the Jewish experience with the Kingdom of God, and it's standardly used in Matthew. Matthew does use the phrase the Kingdom of God, but it's very rare. It's normally the kingdom of the heavens. That's because it expresses the Jewish experience of God, and that experience was in the first heaven. It was in - God appeared in the atmosphere, which is the first heaven. And of course that goes all the way down to the ground. So, entering the Kingdom of the heavens means to engage with what God is doing in the world around us. Now, here's...

New birth

[13:15]

What the verse says is unless you get out of the scribe and Pharisee mode, unless

you come to a different level of goodness, you will not be in interactive relationship with the kingdom of the heavens.

Now there are other passages where Jesus talks about entering it - and of course the one that's most familiar is **John 3:5**, "Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of the heavens." The Kingdom of God, in that case. And once again in Matthew 18, Unless you repent and become like a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of the heavens, in that case. (**Matthew 18:1-4**)

So those are three ways of describing what it means to enter the kingdom of the heavens, and our task now is to try to understand as best we can what he's saying here in Matthew 5 and following about entering it and going beyond the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee.

Pharisee Righteousness

So let's think first about what is the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee. And it is the righteousness or the goodness of the deed, mostly what one did not, because most of these commandments were negative. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness and so on from the Ten Commandments, but the overwhelming number of the commandments are negative.

And they led into a system of righteousness, which is the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, which referred to what you did. And so, what does it mean to go beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees?

Kingdom Righteousness

It means to locate your righteousness in something other than what you do. In order to try to help my students in ethics understand this, I often tell them a thief is not just someone who steals. A thief is someone who would steal if the situation were right.

Inner difference

Now, obviously that's to make a point, and there are some qualifications to be had, but the truth of the matter is, there's a great difference between a person who would steal if the situation were right, and a person who wouldn't steal no matter what the situation was. There's a great difference. It's a difference in the soul of the person. One can have the soul of a thief a murderer or an adulterer, and never do it. Perhaps just because of the fear of what would happen if they did.

Now, it's better not to do it. But what Jesus is saying is unless you get beyond just

not doing it, you're not going to be in interaction with the kingdom of God. So conversely, if you want to get in interaction with the Kingdom of God, you have to move to a different level. And that is the level of your thoughts, your feelings, your character, your habits, habitual way you live in your body and in your world.

So, the cases that you have in Matthew 5 are murder, and you have the - that's the... The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisee was, don't kill anybody! But that's not the Kingdom righteousness. [["The Whole Self"](#)]

Matthew 5 Cases - Lessons in Kingdom Righteousness [16:35]

And so Jesus goes on to contrast the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee with Kingdom righteousness, and we're going to talk more about that tomorrow in detail, because what I want to go is from the general and abstract right down to the most concrete, and we're not going to hit the concrete until tomorrow. Maybe this evening we'll get a little more into it.

Adultery

But the general idea here is, thou shalt not commit adultery. OK, I didn't commit adultery. On the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees I'm OK. And that... Out of that comes language like, I did not have sex with that woman. Did you ever hear that. Language like, Well, it depends on what the meaning of is is. That's classical righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. Depends on what the meaning of is is.

That's the way, and Bill Clinton learned that language, unfortunately, in church. Because in sexual behavior of young people over the last decades, that has emerged a whole list of legalistic distinctions between what you do and what you don't do, and what counts as what. See that's all pharisaism. And that I think is something that's pretty generally known, but it has become a stock in trade now, of young people who are dealing with sexual issues.

Divorce

Then you have other cases like divorce. You had someone who said, Well I divorced my wife, and I did it according to the law. I gave her a bill of divorcement. Pink slip. Gave her a pink slip. I'm righteous. Jesus says no no, you're not righteous if you do that. Moses set up that arrangement, because it was important to keep women alive, among other things. And they could easily be killed if they didn't have that. But that's not a good thing, he says.

Vows

Keeping your vows. I've kept my vows. Well, Jesus says no, it's not a matter of keeping your vows. It's a matter of making them in the first place. Why do you make vows? And so letting your yes be yes, and no be no, means that you go

beyond just the finesse of the wording and keeping your wording, and you go into the heart of why you're saying things to people in the first place.

What does that mean, let your yes be a yes, and your no be a no. It means don't try to manipulate people by saying yesses which are noes, and noes which are yesses. Or saying yesses which are yes yes yes yes yes yes yes, right, trying to wear people down. Just say, it's this way. It's not that way.

Plain speaking, simple, allow others to do what they're going to do, take their stand, and that is the righteousness of the Kingdom. What he's really talking against here is trying to manipulate people by using impressive language. Invoking God. Invoking the devil.

And then he goes on to spell out some more particular kinds of things. I just want you to see the cases there, to get the contrast.

Luke 12:1 - *"Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees."* [20:10]

Now, why is the leaven of the Pharisees' hypocrisy? This will help us understand more about what the righteousness of scribe and Pharisee is; and Jesus talks a lot about the scribes and the Pharisees, and he really warns us about the leaven of the Pharisees, and doing what the Pharisees do. So, in Luke 11 there, he says, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

What does leaven stand for? You know, we talked about leaven or yeast when we started out here, and we talked about how the Kingdom of God is like yeast or leaven that a woman hid in a bushel of dough or something of that sort, and just put it in there. And then pretty soon, everywhere in that dough, there was leaven. It's a moving, living, force.

So when Jesus speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, he's talking about the moving, living force in pharisaism. Our language today, we might say the "spirit" of the Pharisee is hypocrisy. It's what moves and drives everything they do.

Concern for doing right

But the question is why is the leaven of the Pharisee hypocrisy. Two things you have to understand. One's good. The Pharisee is really concerned about doing the right thing. That's good. That's commendable.

And we want to do justice to the Pharisee, and you want to remember that probably, the best followers of Jesus were Pharisees. They were soon ex-Pharisees, but they started out from pharisaism. And these were good people, and they meant well. So that's...

That first part, that's good. They were very serious about doing the right thing, and not doing the wrong thing.

Failure to change the heart

The second part is not good, and explains why, with the first, they're driven into hypocrisy. And that was that if you just try to do the right thing, or not do the wrong thing, you will certainly fail. You cannot succeed on that path. You have to go to a deeper level of the self than controlling your actions.

There are many lessons that Jesus teaches us about this. For example, he says, Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45) That means what there's a lot of in your heart comes out your mouth. And what comes out your mouth is what there's a lot of in your heart.

Remember Mike Tyson bit off Holyfield's ear. And his explanation was, I blew it! That's very common of people. They will... That's supposed to explain something - I blew it. It's supposed to let them off the hook. Oh that wasn't me. Yeah, but it was him. That's why he blew it. Blowing it came out of his heart. Holyfield didn't bite his ear off, you know. He wasn't - that wasn't in him. But Mike Tyson did that. And you look at Mike Tyson, you get a sense of what's in the man.

See, what's in the person comes out, if not the mouth then the action. Our actions do not come from nowhere; they come from somewhere. And the Pharisee always fails because they do not know that. And they do not practice that. They keep trying to control their actions rather than change their heart, and their mind, and their feelings.

Applying Intention

Now we almost ought to pause over this for a moment and just have a moment of meditation, because this is the crux of the matter. We talked about intention earlier and we'll have to talk about intention again.

But the intention has to be applied at the right place. I have to become the kind of person who not only would not kill, or does not kill, but who would not kill. Not only who does not commit adultery, but would not. See, that...

So my intention has to be applied at that level, and that's what Jesus is saying. Because when you turn to that level, then the kingdom of the heavens will interact with you, and you will find that you can change. But if you stay at the act level, the kingdom of the heavens will not cooperate with you, and you will fail.

The role of grace

Now of course one of the great things about grace is grace actually operates at this deeper level. It operates at the other level too, but it is through grace that we can become genuinely transformed and our intentions can be fulfilled to become the kind of person that Jesus was, and that he has called us to be and given to us.

Matthew 23 - Indicting the Pharisees

[25:25]

Now, the indictments of the Pharisees were pretty awesome, and I think we ought to take some time to look at that, so let's turn to Matthew 23, and this isn't the only one, but this is the one where Jesus... This is coming toward the end of his ministry, and this is where he really begins to spell it all out.

And I have to tell you that this is one of the passages that really got after me when I was, as I say, a young minister trying to do something, and I kept coming across this passage. I said, is this talking about me? And I began to suspect maybe all the Pharisees weren't dead, you know? And maybe there were a few - maybe I'm one of them.

Teach without doing

Now here's what he says in chapter 23 of Matthew. The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses, that is to say they profess to teach the Law. Therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe. But do not do what they do. For they say things and do not do them. (Matthew 23:1-3) Would you agree with me that the clear implication of this passage is that you ought to do what you say? Is the clear implication of this passage that we can do the things that Moses said. Would you think that is it? He's giving them a criticism here.

Says, They tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a little finger. (Matthew 23:4) Put out a little finger and lift, see? They do all...

Do to be seen

Now, then he begins to analyze their case. Here's why they fail. Here's why they fail. They do all their deeds to be noticed by men. They broaden their phylacteries, those were ritual clothing, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. (Matthew 23:6) This was supposed to show that they were very righteous. Imagine that. They love the place of honor at banquets.

Remember the Luke 14 passage, about not taking the place of honor, but go sit down at the card table out in the kitchen, and wait till someone calls you. They love the places of honor at banquets, the chief seats in the synagogues. They love

respectful greetings in the marketplace. Being called by men Rabbi. (Matthew 23:6-7)

Rabbi is professor, right. I mean, it's no deal not to come someone Rabbi today if you're not a, if you're not, in our circles. Rabbi is teacher, professor. Doctor. Don't be called Rabbi. You have one teacher, and you're all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth father, for one is father. He's the one in heaven. Do not call them leader, or teacher, for one is your leader that is Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant, and whoever exalts himself will be humbled. And whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23:8-12) See, people who do things to be seen of men are seeking to be exalted.

Now one of the greatest burdens that will ever fall off of your back is when you learn to not do anything to be seen of men. Your life will be much easier. Don't do anything to be seen of men. Jesus taught about that in Matthew 6, didn't he. Talked about doing your alms to be seen of men, talked about praying, and about fasting to be seen of men. He's... Don't do that. If you do it to be seen of men, what will happen? Men will see you. Wow. God will disregard you, because you will have got what you wanted, which was to be seen of men. So men will say, wow that guy really gave a great prayer. Or he gave a wonderful contribution.

Fundraising around universities are interesting. You can get people to give, rich people to give money, but they want their name on the building. The one thing you can't raise funds for is mops and vacuum cleaners to keep the buildings clean after they've built them. I guess if you put their names on the mops, that might help. Why do people give? To be seen of him. So a fundraiser normally has to play on that motivation, or people won't give. This is a great trap.

Obstruct the Kingdom

Well, Jesus gives us some very severe woes now, you know. He's into giving woes. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites because you shut off the kingdom of the heavens from men. For you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites. You devour widows' houses, and while even for a pretense you make long prayers, therefore you shall receive greater condemnation. Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on land and sea to make one proselyte, and when you...he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you yourselves are. (Matthew 23:13-15) Well, from a human point of view you can see why they killed him, can't you. I mean, this is not the way to win friends and influence people.

So, on he goes. And it continues on through the rest of the chapter. Now, I mean, it heats up, You serpents. You brood of vipers. How shall you escape the sentence

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of hell ? (Matthew 23:33) This is for Pharisees. And it winds up in this great lament over Jerusalem. (Matthew 23:37-39) Jerusalem, which did not understand what God was doing and put itself crosswise.

So now you compare that to the goodness of the Kingdom: loving God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength, and your neighbor as yourself, see. Now that's...the difference, is it's internalized. The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisee, in terms of deeds, it is primarily for the benefit of being observed and recognized. It means that you manipulate your social relationships in that way. That your standing before men is the important thing. Your standing in God is pushed away. That leads to hypocrisy.

What is Kingdom Goodness? [[Answer to Q#3](#)]

[33:15]

So now, what is Kingdom goodness? Well, I've said earlier now and I'll say it again. Kingdom goodness means that every aspect of our being is permeated with agape love. Don't worry about perfection, OK, because probably that is process which will not be completed in this life. But we can make progress. And so when you see that bumper sticker: Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven, just remember that there is a lot of distance between being perfect and being forgiven. And that the issue is not being perfect.

The Whole Self - 6 Parts Diagram [Agape is "Kingdom Goodness"] [34:00]

In all aspects of the self, love comes to predominate. What would that look like?

~ **Social Relations**

The issue is getting better. And the way we get better is by following the internal transformation, and I bring back now this diagram because I want to emphasize again that in all aspects of the self, love comes to predominate.

Now what would that mean, let's say, in social relations? In relationships between people. Well, it would mean, it would pull together a lot of stuff we've already talked about. For example, it would mean that rejection goes out of our relationships to others. We don't reject people. Even people we disagree with, and people we think are wrong. We don't reject them. See, to reject someone means to distance them, put out of our relationship. That's what the Pharisees did. That's why they were mad at Jesus about him sitting with people and eating with them. Rejection means to push away, to push away. We don't do that.

A good question for Christian practice is a question I often get in presenting this material to Christians. How can you fire someone in love? How can you fire someone without rejecting them? Now that's very similar to the question that came up yesterday about, can you be a soldier? Can you kill someone in battle in love? What's the answer?

The answer is yes. Can you fire someone in love? Yes. But it rarely is done that way. Can you as a soldier go into battle and cause people to die, and do that as an act of love? Yes you can. But it almost never is done that way. And if it were done that way, there'd be a lot less people dying. And there'd be a lot fewer wars.

Predominance of love

But you can describe a situation in which one would, in an effort to achieve what was loving and good for everyone involved, bring about the death of another person. You can... You don't have to approve of, agree with, people to love them. You have to seek their good in the context of everyone that is involved.

So, for example, if someone is not performing well on the job, and is affecting the wellbeing of everyone in the workplace, the business itself and all of that, time would come when you would say, as an act of love, I have to fire you. I have to let you go. Now, if that happened, what you would see is not distancing, because ordinarily when that happens, the two...the people involved never want to see one another again. So you have to think about how you, if you were going to fire someone, would not distance yourself from them. And if you're being fired, how would you carry that and not distance yourself from the person who fired you? Even if you disagree. See those are the kinds of things that we rarely have a

chance to talk about because we don't even get there to talk about them. We just... We're out the door.

Or in the case of killing, we wind up hating the people that we are opposing. That's usually that's what happens, isn't it, in war. And in fact you'll see the effort of governments to get you to hate the person on the other side.

Elimination of hate

And so those are things that we can work through, and once we begin to understand what love is, then that social circle there can eliminate attack and rejection as personal matters that involve hatred, contempt, and so on. So, most of you are not... You may have seen the pictures of Nazis or Japanese that were used in the Second World War by the government to inflame hatred and contempt for the other side. And I must say that you have to be well advanced in Kingdom living before you can avoid that. But the point is, you can avoid it, and it is a good thing for you to do that. Well that just kind of illustrates that.

~ **The Body** - The body for...

The body is very important, because the body is usually posed to do things that are not loving. And this can...this covers all kinds of activities. But the body can be transformed so that instead of being ready to do the thing that is hateful and unloving, it is ready to do the thing that is loving and unhateful.

~ **The Soul** - The deepest part of the self

[39:30]

So, the soul, the soul is the deepest part of the self, and the soul has to be retuned. The law is basic in this because the soul that works aright, is the soul that naturally follows the law of God. That's why the 19th Psalm says, The law of the God is perfect, transforming the soul. (Psalm 19:7) The law of the God... The law of God is perfect, transforming the soul. It's because as we come back into order, with the law, then the deepest parts of ourself, and the soul is the part of you that makes all the others come together to form one life. And when it's broken, life doesn't come together. So the healing has to go there, and the word, Thou restorest my soul, is a wonderful phrase in the 23rd Psalm, and the soul that is restored is a soul that works in harmony with the law.

God's law

Conversely, if you want your soul to be restored, one way is to begin to track with the law of God, begin to do the things that the law says. Like most people who are in trouble in life, the first thing that they need to do is stop doing things that are wrong. Now, we have a whole system of explanation that sets that aside. But no matter what your situation in life is, the first thing that you need to do is stop doing things that are wrong. First thing that I need to do is stop doing things that

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are wrong. And there will be many effects of that, but most important is my soul will be in track with the Kingdom of God. It will begin to track with the Kingdom of God. And as it does that, then the abundance of the Kingdom of God will increasingly move into my life.

Now, if I have the attitude that I've been insulted, stepped on, spat upon, sat upon, and I have therefore every right to do what is wrong because I've been injured, well then you can have that too. And it will get you absolutely nowhere. But the... Once you begin to track with the law, then you begin to draw on the abundance of the Kingdom of God. That is how you seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and you begin to benefit from that.

Now, I'm not a prosperity gospeler; I don't think it will get you a Cadillac, or anything. The Cadillac isn't anything anymore, is it? You have to go... So it shows you how old I am. So, that's hardly better than a Chevrolet, is it? But what will happen is that everything you need will be provided. That's Kingdom stuff, see. It will be provided. If you don't track with it, then it won't be, because you will not be tracking in the abundance of God's provision.

~ **The Spirit (or the Heart) and The Mind** - Well, all the other parts here, like the spirit or the heart, surrender to God, willing to love, not caught up in having its own way, a mind that is not obsessed with what I want, what's going to happen to me, what's been done to me and so on. But a mind that is devoted to Christ and to God that keeps him before the mind. That's going to bring different feelings; you're going to have joy and peace and love instead of anxiety and hatred and depression and so on. So that's the kind of transformation you get.

Transforming the Actions

Now once you get that kind of transformation, then the actions are different. The actions are a natural expression of what's in those circles. So this little diagram is intended to sort of show that. And you have all the aspects: feeling, thoughts, body, social, there. And then the soul is the circle around the whole thing, and then at the center is the will, and out of the heart comes the action. So, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Well, part...that's partly...you have to understand it partly in terms of how the heart restructures by grace all of those other circles. Because if there are certain things - for example, if you're devoted to Christ, the love of God, loving your neighbor as yourself - if you're devoted there's certain things you will not think. They will not come to mind. And there are certain things that if you think they will shrink any possibility of you loving your neighbor.

Love

See, we have in this country the idea that what you think in your mind is nobody else's business. It's everybody else's business, that you affect by your action, because your actions come out of what is in your mind. But it's a part of what we

call freedom in our country, to think well you can just think anything. It's nobody else's business.

So for example, pornography's a private matter. No, it's not a private matter. Not a private matter at all. And when you see people who are in trouble sexually you're going to probably find it's because of something like that where they've devoted their attention to this and it possesses their mind, and then it comes out. Pornography is a first level problem for ministers in our country. And internet pornography is even stronger because it creates a certain sense of intimacy. It's curious how this works, but cyberspace is seductive because it creates an aspect of intimacy that makes more powerful the sexual tones that come over. And intimacy is what people are looking for in sex. They want intimacy. And they only keep pushing the physical buttons because they hope to get a little intimacy out of it, but it actually just makes it more and more distanced.

So there are certain things in relationships to other people, in churches, in business, in the community - I mean they just won't think. One of the saddest things about our political life is observing what people allow themselves to think about others. I mean, there's a lot of stuff you should just never allow yourself to think the people of good character have always known that. And we even have a little language about that; like, don't go there. Right? That often refers to the social situation, but it's actually advice about our mind, and our feelings. Don't go there. Just don't go there.

So, as that transformation comes about, then the actions will be different. Now the Pharisee says, sit on the action. Kingdom righteousness says, take care of the inside. We're going to have to pay some attention to the actions, that's for sure, because they have consequences, but still, if you want to get control of the actions, you deal with what is on the inside, what is in the heart. OK.

Well I hope you get this picture now, and this is just spells out a little bit more of it, and see what really is the innermost part of us is this heart, and this third point here, the inner tilt click or yes to a more or less extensive course of events, that is what really constitutes the innermost phase of the self.

Let me see how much time I have here to cover what I have to cover.

Transforming the Will

[46:50]

So if we pay attention to the will, then everything else can be directed from that, and so for example with reference to what is in the mind, don't be conformed to this world, be transformed with the reun...how...well, your will has to come into play with that. You have to decide, and you have to do the things that - and that's where spiritual disciplines come in, which we'll talk more about in a little bit.

So in God's plan, the function of the will is to trust God. That's the basic issue. So that means the surrender of the will to God, not to itself. The will is something that has to be surrendered in the sense that it must not be taken as ultimate, or it will be poisonous, it will turn back on the self, and try to devote all of the energies of the self to getting one's own way. You will have your kingdom, God's Kingdom will have to go its way, and you'll take your kingdom and go its way.

So Satan's plan is the... In Satan's plan, the function of the will is to be absorbed in itself. And when we are absorbed in ourselves, then this wonderful phrase in Isaiah 53, All we like sheep have gone astray. (Isaiah 53:6) So now, how does a sheep go astray? Does anyone know how a sheep goes astray? One blade of grass at a time. One nibble at a time. They just nibble, and pretty soon, they don't know where they are.

And that's how we go astray if we are governed by our will. If we just do the thing we want, that's it. And we go astray. If we devote our will to God, and through him, to the good of others, then we don't go astray. But, each of us has turned into his own way, that's the way the sheep goes astray. But we have to have the larger view, and as we have that larger view, then all the segments of the self begin to pull in line, and as a result of that, we have a self that is devoted to God.

Two Forms of the Will

[49:28]

1.) Impulsive Wil

Now, you want to recognize there are two forms the will takes. And this is extremely important for our culture today, which is as we said last time, is absorbed in feeling. And essentially sensual culture. And the first is vital or impulsive will, and that is simply will that identifies itself with desire. If I want it, I grab it. A kid has that kind of will. It's typical of a child to have vital or impulsive will. And again, there's nothing wrong with that. We have to have that as well, especially when we're younger, because that's what keeps us alive and nourishes us and does things like that, so that's important. But you can't live by that. You cannot live by following your desires. For one thing, your desires conflict.

2.) Rational will

The second thing is, your desires conflict with the other desires of others you're intimately related to, so you have to have a larger picture, and that's where the rational, or moral, will comes in. And that's normative for adults. Typical of adults, but normative for adults, but the failure to have this is typical of adults who never grow up. So you need to insert there, failure is typical of adults who never grow up. Typically that's the kind of person who has to have what they want when they

want it, who gets attached to what they want, and disregards the larger good.

The rational or moral will is normative because it looks at the larger picture. It says, not what do I want, but, what is good. Now the person who doesn't grow up is the person who doesn't realize that there is a difference between what you desire, and what's good. They identify the desired with the good. Now, living in the Kingdom of God is the best way to have the larger view as to what is good. And that's where this comes together with what is basically just a psychological understanding of the self.

Discipleship Produces Character

[51:45]

Now then. Character is will settled into habitual patterns of action. And now this is what we're looking for in terms of discipleship. Discipleship is the process through which the character of Christ becomes the settled or habitual pat...patterns of our action. And that means where it is largely outsourced to our body and our social context. Character can be bad, or character can be good.

But what we want is, in the person who is transformed inwardly is, without thinking, they are prepared to do what is good. To do what is right. Without thinking. Character is to a large degree what you do without thinking. But it also in some degree has to do with what you do after you think.

Automatic responses

Again, see, use Peter here as the illustration, because we're all familiar with it. What...When Peter said to Jesus, I will not deny you, he meant it. He meant it. When Jesus said, You will deny me three times, he wasn't questioning Peter's intentions, but he knew what was in the rest of Peter. And Peter did not know that. So Peter didn't know his character; Jesus knew his character. (Mark 14:26-31)

Now, it is a tribute to Peter's character that also after he did it he went out and wept bitterly. (Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:62) Right. That was his character too. But that was not the part of the character that controlled his automatic responses. His automatic response was different from his intention, and that is typical of the person whose character has not been redeemed and healed, and brought to wholeness in Christ. Is it inconsistent.

You ever have someone in your church or on your staff that is inconsistent. Most of us have had to deal with that. Sometimes we've had to deal with it in ourself. What do we say of such a person? You can't count on them. You can count on the person who is ready to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done. That's the person of good consistent character. Now some people you can count on to do the wrong thing. That's bad character. It's still character. They consistently do

what is wrong.

Self control

Now this idea of outsourcing is crucial. Don't underestimate it. That's why I brought up the circle diagram in the earlier talk and brought it up again today. It's because you have to understand how character works. Character involves all of those aspects of the self. But character is not just a matter of will. It's all of those things. And you start here, you're reborn, and you're given a relationship to the Kingdom of God and to Jesus, and then with that you begin to move out, and now you hear commands.

Like Peter, 1, 2 Peter 3:18. Perhaps all of you have memorized that. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What does that mean? That means, as you increasingly allow grace to come into all of these areas, see, your character changes. And now you can reliably do the things that you intend to do. Self control is one of the expressions of this. In order to have self control, you have to have a self that is in control. If you have stuff running wild out here, now that's not in control. Because at some point pop! and out comes something. And so, the transformation of the self as whole is what we look at when we are cultivating and growing the righteousness of the Kingdom.

Where Character Goes Wrong

Now the scribe and the Pharisee also has a character; it's just the wrong character. It's just the wrong character. What they have the character of doing is in intending to do things that are right, mainly for appearance, and they have a hidden dimension of themselves which they don't want people to know. That's why openness and truthfulness become such an important part of growth in Christlikeness. It's because that openness keeps us from having that hidden dimension that is running our lives.

Hiddenness

Now, when I was younger I guess I assumed that you always had to have a hidden dimension. And it's a great relief to know that you can come to the place where you don't. Well, what about all the disgraceful things you did? You just open up. That's what confession is about. You stop hiding. You allow people to know who you are. See. And you stop saying, well I can't let them know that about me, or I wouldn't be able to lead. I wouldn't be able to influence; no one would listen to me any longer. Well hopefully that's in the past, and you can understand that that is governed, covered by the blood of Jesus, by forgiveness, and then you have to count on them to accept that also, right.

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Now, if it's in the future, confession is one of the things as a discipline that is so powerful and the reason for that is it opens up the self and enables it to get help to change. So, confession as they say, is good for the soul but bad for the reputation. But that's partly why it's good for the soul, is it's bad for the reputation. And we need to come to the place to where we're not hiding what we have done anymore. We are, we admit we are sinners, right? Admit that. And that's hard for our churches often, because we're caught up in the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. I don't mean that you should rub this in everyone's face that comes by.

Transparency

But you want to be in a position where you're not hiding from the past. And if there's something in the present you want to have someone, some group of people, that you are opening that to as you ask for help. To get rid of that hidden dimension of the self. We speak about people being transparent. That's what we want is transparency. You can't be transparent unless you've learned to trust God, and unless you have received forgiveness, unless you are prepared to let him handle your public relations. But that's the only place there is any peace, is in transparency. And when we accept that, and we move into it, then that helps clear up all of these areas tremendously. It strengthens us as we move on in growth and grace.

Poised to do what is good

Well, so then, you would have here, how's this - how such love is in the whole person, it possesses all those dimensions of the circle, and poises them towards what is good and what is right. The body is then poised to do what is good without thinking about it. See Peter didn't know that his body was poised to do what was wrong without thinking about it. That's what he didn't know about himself; Jesus knew that about him. Relations to others purged from withdrawal and attack, the soul running smoothly in the tracks of the Kingdom.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 7 @ 1:00:53** ~ ~ ~

~ 08 **The Process of Transformation - Grace** [YouTube link] [38:24]

[—> Key Session Points: “Grace” applied thru “V-I-M” and Disciplines]

The Process of Transformation

Now, now we come to the major issue that we have to deal with, and that is in some detail how this happens. And I'm going to go over this in a general way now, and then in the meetings later, I will talk about some of the particular things that we can do.

Grace

Not by human effort alone, OK. Let's settle that. So, not without grace. We're not talking about bringing the inner transformation of the self into Christlikeness by human effort. OK?

But note the next one. Not without human effort. We still have to act. The statement, Grow in grace, from Peter is a command. That means that we do it.

Effort

How do you grow in grace? That's our question. How do you grow in grace? Grace is a gift. Can you control that? Can you pull up to it like you would pull up to the pump at a gas station and just download grace.

Well, the answer is, sort of. Strangely enough. And one of the greatest difficulties that we have in our religious circles today is not understanding how effort works with grace. But you must make an effort if this transformation is to come about. Not without grace, and the Holy Spirit. Obviously. But not by grace and the Holy Spirit alone. That's passivity. And the transformation of the inner being, the righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee is going to be something that will not happen passively.

Jesus

So now notice the last line on the screen, because this will give you some balance I think. We're very familiar with the statement, Without me you can do nothing. **(John 15:5)** And that is true. That is why there is no boasting in this matter. Paul makes it very clear, Boasting is eliminated because it's by grace. **(Romans 3:27)** Right? Boasting is a terrible thing that it disrupts everything in Kingdom living, so that has to be eliminated. But now notice also that you can be sure if you do nothing it will be without him. And there's again a place we just kind of need to

stop and let the - just let sit with you. If we do nothing, it will be without him. Without me you can do nothing.

OK, yes, right. We agree. But that's not the end of the story. Because in the very passage in which Jesus is saying, without me you can nothing...do nothing, he's giving you a command. Do you remember what the command is? It is, Abide in the vine. (**John 15:1-11**) That's a command. That's like grow in grace. Abide in the vine.

I. The Role of Grace in the Life We are Talking About [3:45]

So now this brings us to this issue that we've brought up several times, and now we need to try to say something a little more definitive on it. And that is the role of grace in the life we're talking about. So let's start with a statement about what grace is, and just try it on, folks. I'm not, you know, I'm not trying to dictate to you. I give you things that you can see how they work. So let's go with this idea of grace, and see if that is going to do the job.

God acting

Grace is God acting in our lives to bring about what we cannot do on our own. That's grace. That's God's grace. God acting in our lives to bring about what we cannot do on our own. Is it unmerited favor? Of course it's unmerited favor. But if you just say grace is unmerited favor, you don't say what it does.

And this is where the teaching of grace can easily slip over into the default gospel that says grace just have to do with the imputation of righteousness. It has to do with merit of Christ being substituted for your demerit, to bring you out of the red and into the black with God, you see. So you have to say more about grace than just that it is unmerited favor. Is it unmerited favor? Yes, it is unmerited favor. What does it do? It does this. Grace is God acting in our life to bring about what we cannot make happen on our own.

Supports effort

So now, we'll want to look at some of these passages in a moment to see how this works, but there're just another point or two here that we need to make.

And the most important one is that grace is not opposed to effort, but to earning. God acting in our life doesn't mean that we do nothing. But grace means that we never come to the place of saying we've earned what comes out at the end of the process. Earning out of the question. Whether it's earning your way into heaven, or earning success in your ministry, or earning a lovely family that you have. No,

grace is involved in that. You can never say, I earned it. You always wind up saying, Thank God for that. Because that's the activity of God on your behalf.

And so, the effect is to eliminate pride, and boasting, and self-reliance, and self-will. It is to say to God, I am dependent on you. I am surrendered to you. I am following your direction. I'm expecting your help. I'm going to do my very best, but I'm not going to trust my best. I will engage in disciplines, but I don't trust disciplines, right. I will seek to know, to get knowledge, I'll try to keep myself strong on all of that. But I don't trust that. My trust is in God.

So grace does not make you passive, but it also doesn't allow you to be proud. It does not allow you to trust yourself. Because you recognize that what you're involved in is something that is far greater than anything that you can do.

Paul On Grace

[7:25]

Well, this last point is we need to look at a few verses on this one. Here's a case that I spoke about last night, in **Ephesians 3:8**. You remember what Paul said there? Unto me the least of all saints, this grace is given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ. Now just think about that. That's grace. Does it have to do with guilt? No. Does it have to do with God acting in our lives to bring about what we can't do on our own? Yes. Obviously. That's what Paul's talking about.

1 Corinthians 15:10. Another statement by Paul about grace. He really does seem to have been the one who understood it best, and certainly he deserves a lot of attention for the way...for what he says about grace. **1 Corinthians 15:10** is he's talking about how he was born out of time as a witness to Christ. You remember this passage I trust. He's talking about all the people who had seen Christ, and he says in **verse 9**, *"I am the least of the apostles . I'm not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am. And his grace towards me did not prove in vain. But I labored even more than all of them."*

Grace as foundation for good works

And then he catches himself. There's a beautiful expression of the consciousness of how grace and effort work together in the life of Paul. I labored even more than all of them. Whoop! Yet not I, but the grace of God with me. **(1 Corinthians 15:10)**

Remember our little discussion of God with us, God with us, God with us, last...yesterday. See that's... Now, what is grace? Have you internalized this idea? Grace is God acting in our lives to bring about what we cannot do on our own.

Paul. What is it he couldn't do on his own? He couldn't have had the tremendous effect he had in preaching the gospel on his own.

Strictly speaking, I'm sure that it's true at this time of all the apostles, if you looked at the work that was done, Paul was miles ahead of them. Miles ahead of them. At that time. I don't say later. Maybe later on, some got it. And caught up and went ahead. I wouldn't want to say; I don't know how to judge that; eternity will tell, possibly. But at this point there's just no question.

But what, Paul had just gone along, crossed the Greco- Roman world like a cyclone. And was it him? Well, he did something; if he had stayed home it wouldn't have happened, would he? If he just said, I'm going to stay in my cave, or I'm going to sit around the Sanhedrin down here, and though they're Christian I'll sort of haunt them.

No. He got out. He went. **2 Corinthians 9:8** is a really good passage. This is a discussion of the Macedonians giving, and he's talking here about how they had given far beyond what they were able. And given not grudgingly or under compulsion, but they had just given. And so this is an offering situation, missions offering, or something like that.

Look at **verse 8 in 2 Corinthians 9**. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance of every good work. Every good deed. For every good deed. You see what grace is there? Is that guilt? Are we talking about dealing with guilt? No. It's not just for guilt. Grace is for life. Guilt is one of the things we need it for, but when we're done with dealing with that we still need grace.

Grace as fuel for living

See, the person who is living fully in the Kingdom of God is consuming, if you wish, consuming grace all the time. But not just for guilt. The sinner needs grace for forgiveness, yes. To deal with guilt, there's not doubt about that. But compared to the grace that the saint uses in their lifetime, that's nothing. The saint burns grace like a 747 burns fuel on takeoff, see. They're burning it in quantities. Because what they're doing is always accompanied by grace, and much more is being accomplished than they could possibly do on their own.

And then one of the most famous passages on grace is Paul's statement: My grace is sufficient for you. (**2 Corinthians 12:9**) This was not to make up for guilt; it was to supply the strength that Paul needed in his weakness to do the things that he needed to do. And because this was such a wonderful thing, you have the statement of Paul, Most gladly therefore I would rather boast, here's where boasting comes in, about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in

me. My weakness is an opportunity for the grace of God, the power of Christ is the grace of God; God is acting and alive, Thank God I am weak. **(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)**

Now, try that on, would you? Thank God I am weak. Why? Because when I am weak, I get to know the power of God working in me. Look at what the man says! Therefore I am well content with weakness, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then I am strong. **(2 Corinthians 12:10)**

Now. Wow. We have to put that into ordinary life. And we think about all the things we might suffer from. The attacks... We might imagine a person who is being attacked in their ministry or their work, and say, Thank God for that. Someone's being insulted. That actually happens in the church, doesn't it? Thank God I'm being insulted. Thank God I'm being attacked. Thank God I am weak.

Can you even imagine that? Why would one be thankful? Because they expected to see God acting in that situation. And that is better than them being able to control it themselves. That's what Paul is talking about.

II. Holistic Picture of Spiritual Growth

[15:10]

Now, this is a kind of holistic picture of spiritual growth and I have to give it because we want to have all the picture...all the factors in place. And if we have these factors in place, our mind is centered in the mind of Christ, and we will gradually take on that mind, and we'll have it.

—> *The Golden Triangle*

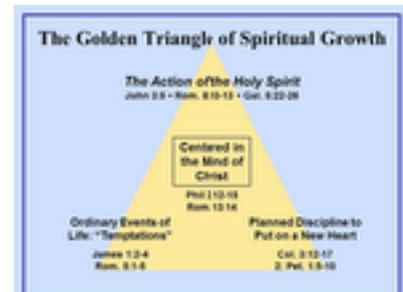
Top - Action of the Holy Spirit

You start at the top. This is the action of the Holy Spirit. Don't go anywhere without that. That's grace in action.

Bottom Left - Ordinary Events of Life

Down here at the left are the ordinary events of life. That means you take where you are. You accept where you are. You say, this is the place. This is Jacob saying, I did not know God was in this place. God was in this place and I didn't know it. This is the gateway of heaven. **(Genesis 28:10-17)**

Well, that's what Paul is saying when he talks about taking pleasure in his weaknesses. He's saying the same thing. So we don't throw our temptations away. We don't flee to a monastery. We live in ordinary life and there we experience



trials. So the ordinary events of life turn out to be trials or temptations. We're not distressed about those. Why? Well because we expect God to act in those situations. OK.

Bottom Right - Planned disciplines to put on a new heart

But now wait a moment. It may not be possible for us to hold still and let that happen. That's where this side comes in, planned disciplines to put on a new heart. When you fail, what are you going to do? Try harder? No. See, what you require in this process of the transformation of the inner person, in the righteousness that is beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisee, what you need here is not just trying. You need to put yourself in a position where you can train and receive help. And that is where planned disciplines to put on a new heart come in.

[17:15] **2 Peter 1:5 through 10** is a story about a progression: Add to your faith, add to your virtue knowledge, and so up the line until you get to agape again. But the planned disciplines here are crucial. And this is I think the area where when we're thinking in terms of what we do in the religious life, we are most apt to miss. We are most apt to miss the understanding that we have to take practices that enable us to receive grace in the ordinary events of life, to keep our mind centered in the mind of Christ, and acting with the Holy Spirit, to be the kind of person that Jesus has called us to be and gives us to be. You plan for this.

III. V-I-M Principle

[18:20]

I'll talk more about this evening. [[Session 9 @ 32:20-39:50 \(p. 80\)](#)]

But these are the... This is the outline of spiritual growth. If you're going to change personally in any way, if you're going to learn to speak French, dance the polka, carry on conversation, save money, lose weight, any kind of change that you want to go through, you have to have these three elements. If you don't have them, and they're not rightly related, probably change is not going to happen. If you have them, and they're right related, change can happen, even at a natural level.

~ VISION

You have to have the vision of the goodness of what you're after. You have to be convinced that's a good thing. And the educational illustrations are again the most familiar, and I think the most illuminating. Back to our talk about learning algebra or calculus earlier. If you have a vision of the goodness of it, then you're ready to move on to the intention to realize the vision. If you don't have that, the intention won't form.

Now, I have a very nice exercise machine at home. It is relatively unused. And I can tell you why it's relatively unused. I bought it once when I thought it would be a good idea. But I had no vision, and no intention to go with it. So, it sits there. And it's a means. It would work if I had the vision and the intention. I'm told that there are other people who have that same sort of thing. I understand it. It's how it works.

Truthfully it just doesn't mean that too much, that much, to me, and I don't think it's that important. I do try to watch my health; I try to be careful about eating and getting some exercise and so on. And I can ride that thing once in a while. But I don't do it consistently because I don't have the vision, and I haven't formed the intention. I just have the means.

Now, that's where, when we come back to the gospel gives us the vision. If we don't have a vision that's provided, a gospel that provides a vision of something to be done. In this case we're talking about living in the Kingdom of God.

~ INTENTION

If we don't have the vision, we won't form the intention. We won't decide to do it. And I spoke earlier about intention when I said the reason why we don't for example learn to bless those who curse us is because we never intend to do it. We don't intend it. It isn't the law of gravity. It's simply for the failure of intention.

Why does the intention fail? We don't have a vision of the goodness of it? See, when we get gripped with the vision of the goodness of it, then the intention will follow. And once we have the intention, then the means comes in. And we find the means and actually it isn't all that hard.

~ MEANS

And, the means aren't...they don't fall in the area of righteousness and things we have to do to obey Christ. Christ doesn't tell us to go into solitude. He went into solitude. And one of the things that suggested to me I should go into solitude was that if he needed it, I might need a little of it myself. So, I got to thinking about well maybe there's something here. And that's what led me, as I said earlier, when I was concerned about being able to preach effectively, and realized that prayer was connected to that, and realized I couldn't pray in the condition I was in, then I moved more or less by accident into solitude and discovered what solitude and silence could do to build those connections. But that's all means.

Now my intention in that case, or my vision, my vision was a soul-winner. Preaching to bring people to trust Christ. And so that intention to do that based on

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the vision of this as good things, led me eventually into means. I had to back my way into it. But see I thought that solitude and silence sounded awfully Catholic, and I wasn't into that bag at the time. In fact, I was young and full of spizz, and I thought they were all wrong. But I hadn't...I had no experience of it. I had to work my way back, then reading helped me see things differently, and practice a back and forth between - leads into means.

So that my intention to bring to pass a certain vision, and the vision changed as it went along because I began to realize that perhaps it was very important what kind of person I was. And not just a whizz bang preacher. I used to preach like a machine gun, until a man once said to me, Why do you preach so fast? Why don't you give people time to think about what you're saying? And I realized I didn't want them to think. I wanted to keep them back on their heels. I wanted them to respond. I didn't want 'em, to give them, to think. I wanted to manage them and manipulate them, and get them to do what I wanted to get them to do. So I had to go through a whole process of rethinking that.

So the vision shifts, I think improves in some measure, as we go along. And as it does then our intention has to change. And so I became intent more on who I was than what I was doing. I'm still concerned about what I was doing. I'm concerned about results, but I now believe the most important thing that God gets out of my life is the person I become. Actually, I think the most important thing I get out of my life is the person I become. That the things I might accomplish in the way of ministry, it...they're very small compared to the importance of my becoming Christlike. I actually believe that the more Christlike I become the greater my results will be, but that's not why I do it.

The Quality of Life

So now, that goes back to the statement I said earlier today that the church's problem is never that we need more money, more influence, more people. The problem is always of the quality of the people who are there, and that begins with me. If there's a problem, that begins with me. What is the quality of my life? Now, of course there are meaningful questions to be raised about other things, but that I think is really fundamental.

Well, let me just, I think the last thing I can get done in the time I have is just look at this list. And then maybe just an additional point or two, and then we'll have to quit.

IV. Understand the Disciplines

[26:00]

~ Disciplines of Abstinence

There are many ways of classifying disciplines. I think it's really helpful to understand them in terms of disciplines of abstinence, as opposed to disciplines of engagement. Disciplines of abstinence refers to things you abstain from, that you need to step out of in order to allow things to shift around in your soul and your body, and in particular to allow you to break free of old patterns that keep you enslaved.

~ Disciplines of Engagement

Now, I started over here. You see. Study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession. And those are good things. But the thing is I didn't know those were disciplines. I didn't know what a discipline was. So I was just trying to do those.

Now, if that's all you got, that's a short recipe for burnout. That's what that is. So you grind away at those. And especially in a social context where people have all sorts of things for you to do, that's going to burn you out. Because it will not put you in touch with the things that will nourish you and grow you. It will not allow you to have a joyous, strong, walk with Jesus. In order to get that you have to shift over, and you have to practice some of these other things.

And I've mentioned the importance of solitude, and silence is very important. Fasting. Solitude, silence, and fasting are the big ones on the list. The others are more like hygienic exercises. They're important, very important. But they don't have the importance of those first three. You begin to move into them. You begin to practice them, and as you do, they begin to sustain you.

Usually with something like solitude it begins very quickly. And I would encourage anyone to begin to try to have substantial periods of time every week when they're simply alone, doing nothing. Solitude primarily means doing nothing. Solitude is connected to Sabbath. And Sabbath is still one of the big deals, one of the big commandments, as in often people think that was the ritual law, and not the moral law. No, it turns out to be moral law, because it has so much to do with your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others that you're related to. And Sabbath means you do no work. And solitude is for most people the only way they can start practicing Sabbath is to go into solitude, because as long as they're around others the others will keep them working.

IV. A.) Summary of Disciplines in Practice

[29:15]

So, you need to move over to that side, and begin to experiment with them. And as you experiment with them, they will begin to confirm themselves to you. You can talk endlessly about them, but when you really come to know them by practicing. And you enter into them experimentally, you enter into them expecting the Lord to lead you and be with you and he will. This will be a part of his teaching presence with you. Don't try to force things. Don't try to make things happen. Be gentle, be experimental. If you don't succeed with this for some reason, don't worry about it. Find out what went wrong, try to fix it, and try it again.

Not righteousness

I say these are not righteousnesses. They are wisdom. They're not laws. They're wisdom. And as you enter into them, you will begin to experience from God and from your own nature and soul a kind of renewal and strength that will then put you in a position to engage in study and worship and celebration in a way you've never done it before.

And out of this will come a richness of your life in the Kingdom that will allow you to do the things that Jesus said at a walk. And all of the struggle and the tension will gradually move out of your life, and you'll understand what it means when Jesus says, My yoke is easy and my burden is light. **Matthew 11:28**

Not behavior modification

But now remember, this is not behavior modification. That's one of the differences between a wonderful program like Alcoholics Anonymous and spiritual disciplines. Alcoholics Anonymous is aimed at behavior modification. This is not aimed at behavior modification. But it has as its result incredible behaviour modification.

But that's not what you aim at. You aim at the inner transformation of the self. And then that comes to pass as your efforts and your experience grows. And this is what it means then to grow in grace, because as you enter into these things you increasingly receive grace through your knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

IV. B.) How does one practice the disciplines?

[31:30]

Well, you decide to live a Jesus student. You begin to obey his teachings. You observe why you fail, and you will fail. And then do in reliance on the Spirit what will remove the causes of these failures. You will find that they are disciplines. Now that list is not a complete list. There are other things that also are disciplines.

And I'm - I notice that I did not give the standard definition of what a discipline is. You have to have the concept. So let me just give it to you now. A discipline is something in your power that you do. A discipline is something in your power that you do, in order to enable you to do what you cannot do by direct effort. It's something in your power that you do, in order to enable you to do what you cannot do by direct effort. So the principle is in direction. You find the things that will help you grow and change and you do those and then as a result what comes out of you is different, because what is inside you is different.

So, that's the way you do it. If you don't decide to live as Jesus' student you're not a disciple, and disciplines are for disciples. They can do you a little good here and there if you're not a disciple, but still, if you're going to take an orderly approach to the change or the transformation into Christlikeness you need to do this.

IV. C.) Churches & Spiritual Disciplines

[33:18]

Now, churches that are making motions in the direction of discipleship and transformation, always find that they have to organize their program of spiritual growth and development around the disciplines. Of course that includes church and giving and other things like that, but it's always much more.

You cannot get growth in Christlikeness out of church as usual. There just isn't enough there. You have to do more. A couple of hours in church, some giving, it isn't enough. So you have to plan for more. So many churches, like the ones I've mentioned, are making available more intensive experiences. For example, instead of having a group that instead of just going to church on Sunday, they take them to a retreat. And they have a Friday through Sunday evening retreat. And they allow them to be practicing some of these disciplines. And that's one way of going beyond things as usual.

The result will be you'll get out of improper subordination in yourself, where body is running the show, soul is subordinate to that, the mind to the soul, and the spirit to the mind, and God to the whole shebang. That's the situation that people live in, sometimes they just leave out God and live for their body. And the prominence of the body in human life is the result of that. Then the proper subordination shifts those, puts God first, the spirit is the will, it puts the will under God, then the mind at the direction of the spirit, thoughts and feelings, then the soul begins to respond to the mind and to the spirit, and to God. And the body finally takes its place under the soul, rather than driving the soul, which drives the mind, which drives the spirit, which tries to drive God, which doesn't work very well.

Relationship Between Salvation and Transformation [35:38]

So what does all this have to do with being saved? We have to come back to that question, because as long as you think it has nothing to do with being saved it will precisely amount to nothing. And I don't need to go back and talk about the situation we find ourselves in for the most part in our culture and in our churches, where discipleship is one thing, and being a Christian is another.

IV. D.) Theology Behind Spiritual Growth

Regeneration

But the way this works is, regeneration, new life from above, comes at the new birth. Now we're entering into an interactive relationship with God and his Son Jesus, and in his Kingdom. Since that has happened, then forgiveness, justification, is an appropriate thing. We are forgiven. I don't mean to suggest that you have to worry about which of these comes first, but they do come together. Then, that life which comes in regeneration naturally develops into sanctification. Sanctification means simply the established relationship, walk with Jesus. And all of the parts of the self are involved.

Glorification

Now that naturally progresses to glorification. Glorification has already begun. Remember Colossians 3 again? When Christ who is our life shall appear then you also shall appear glorious. **(Colossians 3:4)** Well that glory begins to shine in you already, and when you're walking this path, you're going to look differently. And there's going to be something in you that people can see. And they will respond to it, and they will want to know where it comes from, and they'll want to have it themselves. There will be a beauty in you.

Do you ever use that song, Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me? Did you ever hear that song? Anyone? A wonderful song. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. I should stand up and sing it, but probably you couldn't stand that. And being saved is not a matter of where you're going, but who you are now. You are a participant in the life that Jesus is now living here.

And that's what salvation is. And that all fits together, you see, once you start at the right place, and keep Jesus in the right place in all of this, namely central, and you see him as King over a Kingdom, in which he invites you to live with him now. And God then as **Colossians 1:13** says, We are transformed from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 8 @ 38:23** ~ ~ ~

Training Differently - Changing the Roots of Behavior

This involves...

- Wanting to not want what we now want.
 - Desiring to not have desires we now have.
 - Wanting to not think as we now think.

You have to go to that level to begin to deal with the roots of behavior.

[\[Repentance\]](#)

That really gets to serious change. You want to have different thoughts, feelings, different ways of interacting with people.

* Church Life Prayer - At the social level, we have to change the way we pray for people. Instead of promising to pray for people, say, "Let's pray right now." That's a considerable step for many people. That's at a social level.

We have to want to change those inner habits. We have to really want our should to hook up in different ways. If we don't understand this, we won't get down to the level of changes that really need to be made. That will affect our church activities too.

How We Gather as Churches

[3:00]

One of things you have to think is what we do know is not what the church has always done. It does not mean what we now do is not wrong but not always what the church has done. One thing you can say is that the Church has always "gathered". People have come together. Once you get past that, there's not a lot we've always done. Often our practices when we do gather are more of things what we do is from society rather than something that would be wise for the church to do.

Pastors & leaders have the primary responsibility of enabling people to be together in way that they will flourish and grow in Christlikeness. They will develop spiritual competence. They will be able to do things we associate with being a Christian - be able & competent in things like speaking the Gospel, helping people who need help, praying, enduring suffering joyously. That's what we're aiming at.

Ephesians 4 - *What we do when we gather as a church.*

[5:30]

Tied to the Great Commission, to the V-I-M principle.

The communities use to gather in the churches. That is no longer possible. The demographics are very different. Have to think differently than 75 years ago.

Statements of what it's supposed to all come out to... [6:30]

—> The basic objective - Paul is talking about gifting of people in the church.

UNITY - 4:1 - *"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling in which you've been called...gentleness, patience, forbearance..."*

The church will be a community where there is no rejection. Offenses will be dealt with forgiveness. People would not go off on their own and sulking and resenting things and staying angry. The idea of...

"Preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all..."

The kind of unity in love that is envisioned among the disciples of Jesus.

"By your love for one another they will know you are my students"

John 13:33-35 Not the right doctrine, not right practice. One thing - LOVE.

GIFTING

People acting with extraordinary power to accomplish the ends of the Church. Not a manifestation of human abilities but a manifestation of Kingdom power. The Kingdom comes into the Church. People of Christ would have the unity because the people in leadership are exercising gifts - **grace** to accomplish what they can't accomplish from human ingenuity. Not wind up humanly engineered.

v. 11 *"Gifts to equip the saints for the work of service/ministry to build the body."*

—> *Church growth is not more Christians but bigger Christians.*

v. 13 *"Until we all attain the unity...maturity...fullness of Christ."*

v. 14 Results: *"No longer children..."* Solid people who can't be thrown around

v. 15 Contrasted with *"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up..."*

[14:10] When you talk about church growth, talk about this passage. Numbers are not to be despised but the truth is you get more numbers if you have this kind of growth than if you don't.

The natural process for the spread of the gospel and bringing of people into the body of Christ is one on one contact with individuals who have in them something so strong and so powerful that other people by and large will naturally want it.

The ordinary person will, when they see this realization of Christ in individuals, they will come. You won't have enough room to hold them.

PUT OFF OLD 4:22 - *"Lay aside the old self."* [15:00]

All the parts of the self that are filled with the wrong stuff. Something you do. There is not suggestion that it will just happen. It won't just happen to you. It won't happen unless you have help but it won't happen if you don't do it. *"I really want to change."* We have to fill out the words and make the meaningful. "Laying aside" ought to mean something. This is major for what we are talking about - what we do in the local congregation.

Another key word - "Mortify" - let it die, to kill it off.

* Mortgage (def.) "To kill something off by degrees"

Colossians 3 - "Your life is hid with Christ in God...Mortify therefore your members which are on the Earth." The parts of your life that you can do in the flesh. "Get rid of evil concupiscence." (inherently bad desires). "Covetousness which is idolatry" the willingness to have what someone else has at their expense.

PUT ON NEW 4:25 - "Put on the new self" - "Speak truth" [20:00]
"...laying off falsehood"

Truth is so central to the kind of growth and community life we are talking about. "Don't give the devil an opportunity."

"Edification according to the need for the moment."

Take the similar passages in Galatians, Colossians, Sermon on the Mount - Don't all say the same thing because they are not Laws. It's not the "list".

They are all expressing a kind of life and activity that naturally wells up from interchange that comes with becoming a Kingdom person following Christ.

What's the deal? If you become the kind of person who lives Ephesians 4, you'll take the Sermon on the Mount in a walk. Colossians 3 will easy. You really have to understand this so you don't fall into legalism. These are not laws. If you get one, you'll have the others. Because you will have changed to such an extent.

If you become the **kind of person** who can bless those who curse you, you will have become the **kind of person** who will be able to do nearly all the others things that are mentioned. That's not true if you try to treat it as laws. You'll drive yourself batty. It comes out before you could stop it. You weren't thinking. The character of legalism is you have to always be thinking and you can't think fast enough to stay up with it.

The Picture of the Church [24:20]

A body of people who are together taking on the character of Christ. Now, it doesn't tell you how to do it. Doesn't tell you to meet on Sundays, in an auditorium, with tables & chairs. For the most part these things don't matter and that's why it doesn't say anything about them.

Leith Anderson - What is not mentioned in scripture. [25:15]

"While the New Testament often speaks about churches, it is surprisingly silent about many matters we associate with church structure and life. No architecture, pulpits, sermons, music, Sunday School, order of worship, no Bibles, denominations, camps, pastor's conferences or board meeting minutes. Those

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striving to be like the New Testament church strive to live its absolutes not details. The details simply are not given."

The Church Today

[26:30]

Q - Why does the New Testament say nothing about all those matters to which the usual congregation today devotes almost all of its attention?

A - It might be because nearly everything we devote our attention to today doesn't matter.

It isn't that it doesn't matter at all but it doesn't matter which of the things that we do to form the framework of our activities. Something else matters not the things that we spend most of our time thinking about.

The Vision - *The Great Commission = Make disciples*

[28:00]

What do you do to do that? [see [Session 5, pages 46-49](#)]

1. Make the Trinitarian presence the rule of your meetings.
2. Teach people to do everything Jesus said (Paul addresses this in Ephesians 4)
 - Paul did not tell us how to do that. I want to suggest that the reason he didn't do that was he assumed the quality of life that we are living would be such that we would attract and enlist other people into discipleship to Jesus. The Holy Spirit would come into the group and supervise and direct as they were disciples. The result is that people would teach one another how to do all the things that Jesus said.

How are people going to gather? We have to think in a different way [29:45]

In Manhattan, you have 10,000 people in one block.

Choice - The natural ways people will be together - OR - meet in one place.

[[The answer - being the church in the 10K minutes not size](#)]

Demographics make it impossible to gather in today's urban communities.

If you filled all the churches/synagogues once a week, you'll reach 3-5%

The church has to be located in a different way. People will still meet. We have to think in a different way about what we do as we carry out the commission of Jesus.

The way we do that in my opinion is we apply **the V-I-M principle: Vision-Intention-Means** now to the group. [32:20]

[[The V-I-M Principle - Session 8 @ 18:20 \(p. 73\)](#)]

We really do ask ourselves, "*What is our vision in coming together?*"

In most cases, we really don't have much of a vision.

"Success" in church - we tend to think ABC: Attendance, Buildings & Cash

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The Vision will determine our Intention; the Intention will relate to the Means.

If we are happy with what we have, we should stay with it. [35:00]

If character transformation of our people and the world is not happening, we need to ask why do we do what we do? Is what we do conducive to the vision we have for living for Christ now?

We take **the V-I-M principle** and apply it to the group.

If the Vision were the Great Commission and the local group identifies that intends it and we do what do to realize that, you have the unity of the V-I-M principle applied to the local group.

[36:40] In my church, my group, is that what we do? It is very hard to come to grips with the the vision that is actually operating in a group. We tend to become obsessed with perpetuating the group trying to make it survive. The result is we have distraction from the Great Commission. We really have to take hold of this. If we are not doing the Great Commission, there are some wrenching things we need to talk about. Applying V-I-M to the local congregations might well mean that there are some radical changes that have to be made.

The typical church, denomination, para-church does not intend and does not have the vision of implementing the Great Commission. They do not come into existence on that basis and usually they don't know it. If we are going to get a hold of our situation today for Christ, this is where we have to start. The common problem is that people are distracted upholding the church as it is. They don't have their eye on transforming the individuals in the group into Christlikeness and that spreading throughout the community in a virus like way not only bringing more people in to the church, which I am sure it will, but also starting groups here, here, here, then spreading out just like Jesus said. (Acts 1:8) [39:50]

Paul's Vision - Treasure & Vessel - II Corinthians 4:7 [40:40]

"Treasure" is "the glory of God in the face of Christ" (v. 6)

Things age, even institutions. In religion, nothing fails like success. The more successful, the more it draws more people who don't share the enthusiasm for Christ and tendency is for the institution to lose it's vision & intention and the means become ineffective. When that happens, the church still wants to go on. The people won't let it die.

* A pastor who took a sledgehammer to the choir loft

Get out of the mode of saving the vessel. The danger is we will perpetuate the vessel and forget the treasure which is Christ living in the group.

"I was determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (Corinthians)

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Paul came in his weakness, apparently not a very good speaker, and saw the power of God accomplishing the transformation of individuals. Paul focused on Christ and what Christ was doing...in your life as Christ acts and lives and works. Our difficulty is to bring ourselves to the point to where that's the only thing we will pay attention to in our groups.

If we are going to see the transformation of our groups into churches - people who come together and in that Christ is living and people are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. This will get us out of the bind of the gap between Christianity and discipleship, between consumer Christianity and Christianity as a perpetual transformation of individuals - *People engaged deeply in pursuing and following after Christ.*

How can we make this possible?

[48:45]

We don't just hold to the distinctions of our group. We don't take the inner transformation as our vision and our goal. We don't expect Paul's words in Ephesians 4 and we don't make it our goal. We have too low expectations. If someone is flourishing in Christ, they are the exception not the rule. We often adjust our group policies to the mediocre, consumer Christian who has no expectation that they will change and grow. The result is that we have people who do not grow. We are often filled with people who are mean, angry, contentious toward each other. We walk on egg shells so we don't offend each other. We try to be nice. The inner reality does not change.

TWO CHURCH PRIORITIES

[50:30]

Church Priority #1 - Examine our Gospel

If the message we preach doesn't naturally lead into discipleship and transformation then it's not going to happen. What do we call people to? What do we tell people is possible in the body of Christ? We have to look at our sermons in a way that would actually happen.

We need to talk about the Kingdom, about God's presence in our lives, about learning as a process that goes on after we become Christians. We have lost the tradition of the seeker by in large in our churches. We have the tradition of arriving and sitting down and saying everything is settled that is essential so I'm just going to wait until I die or we give our attention to other things.

The picture in the New Testament is continually seeking more and more, learning more and more. When you become old, you grow stronger and stronger in spiritual realm because you continue to grow spiritually through death on this side but our life continues in His world. "*You shall not taste death*".

Jesus said, "*I go to prepare a place for you.*" He's working!

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Like here, we will work with Him like He is now working. We will prepare the Universe in which we will live with Him. It isn't going to be just passive observance. Do you ask yourself, "*What will you be doing 400 years from now? 10,000 years from now?*"

Our life here should be a natural progression into eternity. What we're doing here is not just sitting and waiting. You should have more and more power over the goods of this world for the benefit of others who are here and for the glory of God. The Government of God comes to us and gradually extends.

Does our gospel say anything about that?

As we preach the gospel of the Kingdom discipleship begins to emerge.

The primary field of evangelism in our day is the American Church [55:40]

The gospel of discipleship and kingdom living needs to be taught in the large array of non-discipleship Christianity. They who are identified as Christians but are not Disciples need to be evangelized. They need to hear the gospel. If we do that, discipleship will naturally emerge. People are not disciples because they have refused it. By and large they have never been invited. See if people have ever received an intelligent invitation to be a disciple of Jesus.

Until we move to that level, the church will stand as a default position for "Consumer Christianity". You are going to find people may be stirred up. They may be worried about you. "*I'm a Christian. I received Jesus as my savior. Do I need to do anything more than that?*" "*I'm saved. I'm going to Heaven. What's the point of discipleship? I have accepted the system. I don't need discipleship. I'll do that after I die.*"

They have been presented a version of Christianity that has nothing to do with discipleship and they simply don't see the connection.

[A disciple is] the reality of being a person who belongs to Christ is different from the default position.

With an existing group you have to renegotiate the contract with what people have in mind what they are required to do. As discipleship begins to emerge in a group, it will challenge others to begin to think, "*Am I right or not?*" Many will become angry and say, "*You have changed the conditions of our agreement. Our agreement was I can be a Christian and not do what you are talking about. Why are you changing the conditions?*"

This goes deeply into the under-girding theology of our whole Western Christian system. It challenges us to say what really it is to be a Christian and to be saved. That will make very many people unhappy. You're going to be suggesting there is something essential about obeying Christ, about changing, about losing those things that cause so much sin, distress and loss among professing Christians. You will say, "That's not the way it's supposed to be. It can be otherwise. We're going

to take steps to do that because that's what our group stands for." We're going to take steps to renegotiate. You will lose people if you say that.

* Oak Hills Church, Sacramento lost 700 people.

Church Priority #2 - BE then BUILD Disciples

[1:05:15]

The "M" in V-I-M:

Find the Means to Carry out the Intention of a Discipleship Model

[["Make Disciples in the Kingdom" - Session 5 @ 24:25 \(p. 46-49\)](#)]

1.) Be Disciples Yourself

Learning how to do what Jesus said in the clear & unclear areas.

Learn to how to live in the power of God not our own means.

Power comes from God. If it doesn't come from God, I let it go.

The Temptation is to take it into our own hands.

* Uzzah reached out to catch the falling Ark (II Samuel 6:1-6)

If I am going to lead and disciple others, I have to be prepared to let the Ark fall if God does not steady it. I have to be a disciple who really does trust God to do the right thing. If you have leadership like that, you're prepared to move on.

2.) Build Disciples

What are you going to do to help people who say, *"I want to be a disciple and I want to grow? I want to learn how to do the things that Jesus said and Jesus did."*

Aim all our activities at that objective: We are a group of disciples of Jesus Christ. Then people coming in sign on on that basis. The next thing you want to do is to actually teach them to do what Jesus said. Your main business is to grow people as disciples of Jesus.

What kinds of songs, Sunday School, services will we do to accomplish this? All of these will have one objective - How do they relate to learning to do the things Jesus said? Bringing people to the point where they easily and routinely did the things that Jesus said.

CASE STUDY: "Yes be Yes" Teaching

[1:11:00]

Matthew 5:37 - "Let your Yes be Yes and No be No."

Jesus is shifting from the outside to the inside. Why do people swear? It is any way of exaggerating, shading that would be manipulative to people doing things or to believe what they might not believe if they had a flat statement of fact.

v. 37 - If you don't let your Yes be Yes and No be No, there's something inside that needs to be changed. *"Anything beyond this is of evil."* What's the evil? The "evil" is the desire to get people to do things they may not want to do. It can lead to lying but normally this isn't lying, it is a use of language to shade things.

* "Yes be Yes" in Churches - Exaggeration is a primary problem for churches because churches want to present themselves in a good light. That's why there's so much performances in our Christian meetings. We find ourselves in our meetings exaggerating, trying to put things in the best light. Jesus wants us to learn the habit of very simply saying things the way they are and let it stand.

Our Advertising system is manipulative, distracting. Just watch it. Then ask yourself, "*To what extent do our churches and do Christians manage to stay involved in this system in plain speaking?*"

I have to be careful to listen and respond to a way that is simple. If I don't do that, I wind up manipulating the person to make myself or my group look good.

Learning "Yes be Yes" [Two Steps: Awareness & Truth Telling] [1:16:10]

1st Step - AWARENESS - Help people learn of what's going on when they do that.

I am more interested in getting my way. I realize I'm constantly engineering my language. I am more concerned about myself and my projects than I am about them. Help people understand what they are doing when they do that.

- The "Discipline of Silence" teaches us to let people know us without a covering of language. One of the hardest things about being silent is letting people make up their own mind. Here is a Good Discipline - Let others have the last word shifts the ground and it allows them to make up their mind. Often they have things very valuable things to say.

* Family - Let a CHILD have the last word not the PARENT. You have respect for another person. Respect allows them to grow and thrive because they are not being pushed aside by someone else who is asserting their language and pushing their way over the will of the person in question.

* Preachers - Often they need to not say anything and let their people talk.
Swearing - invoking a power to have our way over someone.

2nd Step - TRUTH TELLING [1:19:20]

Identify cases where more than Yes is offered. Not pretending I have done something that I have not. Example in Academia - "*Yes, I read that book.*"

How about not saying anything and letting them think of me what they will. If I'm concerned, I'm going to put the very best spin on me.

What if I lied? Discipline - Go back and tell people the truth when you have lied.

Practical ways to pay a price for what is unlike Jesus.

* A Dad who can not yell at his son. "*Give \$5,000 to your wife's favorite charity every time you yell at your son.*"

* St. Benedict - To fight lustful thoughts he would roll in a briar patch

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When we are prepared to take steps, we can actually change in something as simple as Yes and No and not being manipulative of people.

[—> [Transition from this area of application back to the general discussion](#)]

Practice - Understand what is is and be able to discuss and take suggestions for changing habits. Going through that process, coming back and talking about it, giving feedback. Further discussion, prayer, further suggestions on how to change the habits.

Suppose that's what we did in our CHURCHES - organized entirely around the objective of becoming internally Christ like people who routinely and easily did the things that He said. [1:23:47]

We would have to add to our programs a texture of interaction thick enough and right enough to help people form new habits. It would help us to announce publicly that's what we do.

BUILDING DISCIPLES in FAMILIES

They need this so badly. Dads need to learn how to do this.

* Dallas, *"I hurt my son badly when he was young. I did not do what I know I needed to do - to be as gracious and kind and patient with him as I should have been."*

Could we teach people to be like that? Could we say...

We teach FATHERS & MOTHERS how to deal with CHILDREN in such a way that they do not become frustrated and angry, that they are not hurt. How we handle the situation between parents & children is one where they are nourished and brought up. Even if they are not obedient, we still manage to live with them, love them and grow with them.

One of the biggest problems in today's families is impatience. Children needs lot of patience and understanding. But if the parents are so worried and hurried, they can't be? Can we say to people,

"We can teach you how to live without hurry. How to keep sabbath. How to be strong, rested and present with your children."

"We teach you how to have love in your heart so that the things said in I Corinthians 13 come out - Love is kind, patient, does not envy..."

BUILDING DISCIPLES in CHURCHES

[1:27:55]

You can organize a Christian group around this. You need leaders & teachers that manifest discipleship. There is going to have to Power present. You can not do

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this by just being nice. You have to have both the Fruit of the Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit. If you don't have the Fruit, you can't stand the power of the Gifts. If you don't have the Gifts, you can't sustain a life in which the Fruit flourishes. You have to have both.

Our churches can do this. They have done that in the past. Look at the old Wesleyan class meetings. Look at the Franciscan, Benedictine, Augustinian. Wesley refused to call the movement a church. Wesleyans were called societies. We just need to get Christians together in such a way they understand their objectives, they share their problems, they pray and minister to one another in small groups in such a way that they actually grew into Christlikeness.

It can happen again today if we intend and apply the MEANS that are appropriate to make it happen. [1:30:27]

Why don't we do it? [[Pastors & Leaders are not living as Disciples.](#)]

—> "We teach people to do what Jesus said."

Response - Love those who don't go along. Some may leave. Some may be mad and stay. No matter what, you don't become mad at them. This person disagrees with me but I love them still and I will serve them. Who knows what will come of that. Maybe they will say next time by, *"I see this is right and I want in on it."* As a disciple, I still love those who are not ready to understand. Some when they do understand don't want it.

* Parable of the Sower - They might be in the good soil the next time.

We want to turn our churches into centers of Love (Ephesians 4)

"Speak the Truth in Love." That means *Let our Yes be Yes and our No be No.*

As we do that the body grows in fulness, people nourish one another and change comes about. The body of Christ grows up into the fulness of Jesus Christ and stands in the world as a contact point between Heaven and Earth where the Angels of God descend and ascend upon Jesus who is in the midst of the people.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 9 - 1:34:18** ~ ~ ~

"The Sermon on the Mount"

Opening Prayer

Now gracious Lord, we look to you for help. As you know, we need help, and so we ask you to please come into our midst, and minister to us and be our teacher. And help us think the thoughts that would be in line with your thinking. And see the things to do, and understand how to go about doing them. And that would in such a way that would bring honor and glory to you.

The Church and the Kingdom

All right. Now, today we want to continue our descent into the details; and we started out with very abstract, but I think very important, discussions about what God is doing, what God is like, how he works in human history, and especially how he works in a hidden way; and his Kingdom comes into the world which he made, and was a part of the Kingdom, and in time his Son comes into the world and calls people to follow him. And then we of course fit in there.

Now, last night we tried to talk about how we would proceed in our groups of Christians, local congregations I call them, and that's a good enough phrase for it. How we'd proceed there if in fact we had intended to teach people to do everything that Jesus said.

And I raised the question of whether or not what we do is actually directed towards that, and said that if indeed that were our aim then we would evaluate everything we do in the light of that aim. And I challenge you to think about the vision that actually governs the local group.

And whether or not there is a vision that is any more clear and focused than simply surviving, and, as an old man I used to listen to on the radio used to say, he would ask people to send in their offerings that they might keep on keeping on. And a lot of our groups are just keeping on keeping on. That's the limit of their vision - survival. Perpetuation of what they've been doing. Excuse me.

And so, the issue really is what is - what are we trying to do? And then the clarification of our intention, our decision in the light of that vision. And a major part of pastoring, for example, is wisely arranging for people to be together for their spiritual growth and development, and understanding spiritual growth and development.

Obedience and Spiritual Formation

[3:00]

Now, in terms of increasing obedience to Christ from the heart, a lot of our talk today about spiritual formation doesn't have the focus on obedience. So let me just say, for your consideration, that **the engine that pulls the train of Christian spiritual formation is obedience to Christ.** That's what it's all about.

And now we've talked a lot about how you have to avoid legalism when you're going in that direction. That's absolutely crucial. But, you have to go in that direction. And you go in that direction by - not by aiming at doing the right thing or not doing the wrong thing. That's the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisees. **You aim at obedience to Christ by inward transformation. You aim at inward transformation, and obedience to Christ is the result.**

And so, we were able to talk a little bit last evening about how we would aim at inward transformation. As you recall we discussed this thing that Jesus says about not swearing, and how we need to let our yes be a yes and our no be a no.

What Are We Doing in Local Meetings?

[4:30]

Now, I do want to suggest that most of what we do together and spend our time on in the local meetings is not clearly directed towards that. And if I'm wrong, I want to be told, and I hope I am wrong. But I don't - I think unfortunately that most of what we do is not clearly directed toward that inward transformation that will result in obedience.

And I think the results testify to that. We are in the situation because of what we do and what we preach, or what we don't do and what we don't preach.

So then it's helpful historically to look at how people have been together when they were focused on that. I don't have time to say much of anything about that, but you can learn a lot just by studying how things have gone when things really were working to that end. And there are cases of that. And nearly every denomination can look back at a time when they were focused on that. And that doesn't necessarily mean that you ought to go back and do that - do what that denomination was doing. But you need to find an equivalent where you are. I need to find an equivalent where I am. [\[Church History - see #9 @ the End p. 48\]](#)

And it's a real struggle. It's a real struggle because you are essentially trying to change the understanding that the people have who come, and who support financially, and by their presence and by their efforts. You are essentially changing their understanding of that, and that is something that is tough to negotiate and get through. We talked about some of that last night.

So we need to recognize those problems, but not to be deterred from the goal. So,

the goal namely of ourselves and then leading others to change to the point that they become people who routinely do the things that Jesus said do. Not who do that as an exception, but that's the rule of their life.

Practicing the Sermon on the Mount

[6:50]

Now we want to go back to the Sermon on the Mount, and we want to... We want to try to deal with this sermon more systematically. And let's start at the end. Let's start at **verse 21 of chapter 7 of Matthew**, and here is what Jesus said.

He's actually been warning, in this passage, about not doing the things he said, and about people who don't do the things that he said, and don't teach people to do that. And he says in verse 20 that you will know people by their fruits. In other words, what they do indicates who they really are.

So watch what they do, and in particular if they do not do the things that Jesus said but only pretend to, well then they are back in the category of the hypocrite where the scribe and the Pharisee wound up.

Now *verse 21* says, "*Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of the heavens.*" I remember the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee; that was a talk about how to get beyond that and enter the kingdom of the heavens.

Now do you understand by this point he's not talking about going to heaven when you die? That's the way this verse is often applied, and obviously there is some relationship. If you just say, Lord, Lord, that doesn't get you to the heart level, beyond the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee. Not everyone who says that will enter the kingdom of the heavens.

"But he who does the will of my Father who is in the heavens." **(Matthew 7:21)**

Now see, if you don't understand how Jesus teaches, you'll rush right off and make a bunch of laws and say, I'm going to do that, and I'll enter - probably go to heaven when I die. That misses the whole point of the teaching. He's talking about becoming the kind of person who would do that, the kind of person who would do the things that he said is the kind of person who's going to be in an interactive relationship with the Kingdom of the heavens.

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)** Now, I want you to notice that he doesn't reply to this by saying, You didn't either. You didn't do that. He doesn't say they didn't do that.

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What he says is, well, that's a different story. Then I will declare to you I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness, or people who work iniquity. (**Matthew 7:23**) Or you may have some other translation there.

See, the references back to, again, who are you and not what you do. Some people want to rush right off and say well this is demonic. They were casting out demons in the name of demons. But just notice, now, he doesn't say that.

And I leave you to think that out. Because you see, you can get involved in works like that and still not be changed. Did you know that? You can...that does not require that.

Spiritual Gifts and Character

[10:45]

You remember Samson? Samson did some pretty impressive stuff. (**Judges 15:14-17**) And you'll notice he did it in a strength that was not his. And you'll remember the story well, will you not, that when he lost his connection with God he couldn't do those things anymore. He wound up eyeless in Gaza, grinding at a mill. (**Judges 16:18-22**) One of the great things you learn in the Book of Judges is that mighty deeds do not necessarily have to do with character. God performs mighty deeds through people in many cases because he has something he wants accomplished. And he's prepared to use people to accomplish that.

You look at the Book of...the Books of 1 and 2 Corinthians. And the opening of **I Corinthians**, he says to the Corinthians, now, you do not come behind in any spiritual gift. And what is Corinthians basically about? It's basically about character problems. And about the inner life. And then gifts of course are fitted into that, and I said last night and I want to reemphasize, you can't dispense with those. That's what **Ephesians 4** was about. You have to have gifts.

And you have to have people who are empowered to do things that are not in their own power. And you can't just get along with the fruit. You have to have gifts in order for the body to work, and for people to grow. But you do have to understand that these do not necessarily mean Christlikeness. And sometimes people who have gifts aren't even well balanced. And a gift sometimes seems to require that you not be well balanced to bear the gift, so you have to understand that.

Now look at what Jesus says there. "*I will declare to them I never knew you. And depart from me.*" (**Matthew 7:23**) And then the following verses from **24 through 27**. "*Everyone who hears the words...these words of mine and acts upon them may be compared to a wise person who built his house upon the rock.*" Do you see what it says? Hears and acts. Hears and does them, other translations will say. The rain... In his case, he took the word and he just did it.

Doing what Jesus said

[13:55]

So now what I'm belaboring here with this passage is simply this. I want to ask you the question. After looking at that, do you have the thought that we're supposed to do what Jesus said? Does that impress you as being the situation?

And what is it referring to? It's referring back to all the things he said in the Sermon. It starts out with blessed are the poor in spirit, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, moves on to anger and so on. We're going to go back and spend most of our time this morning on those particular details. But I have to ask you. Is it your impression that there is some good reason why you don't need to do the things that Jesus said.

Avoiding the Sermon on the Mount

[14:50]

Now, there have been whole systems of hermeneutics built around avoiding the Sermon on the Mount. This is sometimes called dispensationalism. But there are actually other versions of it too.

Dispensationalism is the most commonly known version in our country because there was for many years really a wonderful name...man named C.I. Scofield who wrote a Bible called the Scofield Bible. And that Scofield Bible was the seminary to which huge numbers of ministers went for several decades. And I'll tell you, it had wonderful things and very helpful things in it.

But one of them is if you look at the old Scofield notes, the original edition, you will see he plainly says that the Sermon on the Mount is for the millennium, and the only exceptions that he makes are divorce and forgiveness. You should forgive people before the millennium. And before the millennium you are not permitted to divorce. I presume that will extend into the millennium, but... So you have whole systems of avoiding...

See now that, I'm Southern Baptist. Southern Baptist Bibles wear out at Romans 1. *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek ."* **(Romans 1:16)** Charismatic Bibles wear out in **Acts 2**. Right. So that's where the leaves begin to fall out. Or maybe **1 Corinthians 12 and 14**. But the Gospels remain rather pristine in those circles.

You might not know - I've actually had people say to me in churches where I've gone and preached the - Why don't we hear this? Jesus is pretty clear about it, isn't he. I mean, he doesn't say now, in the millennium the poor in spirit are going to be blessed, and in the millennium you shouldn't speak with contempt for people. He doesn't say that. That's an imposed system, and it reflects a serious

doubt about whether or not we are supposed to do or can do the things that Jesus said.

Johnny Cash has a song; we had Johnny Cash on here yesterday I think. I love Johnny Cash. He has an old song that says, The beast in me is caged by frail and fragile bars. That means it's in there. The beast in me stays. And there's a very frail hold over that beast. And you hear people present the Christian faith as if that's what it...that's the way it is until you die. And you can't really do it.

Charlie Daniels...you know Charlie Daniels? Oh Jesus how could you love me? Oh Jesus how could you love me? Cause when I've a choice between good and bad I choose bad two out of three. You ever hear that song? See that's a part of culture.

Down in South Missouri we had an associational missionary named Earn Elliott. And Earn had really been around the road. He was a wonderful fellow. And he used to say, Well, when you convert 'em you might as well just knock 'em in the head real quick, because they're bigger then than they're ever gonna be again. He said they're like wasps. You know, when wasps hatch out, they're still damp, and swollen, and then after they're out for a little while they dry out and they get smaller. He said they're like wasps.

Avoiding the Sermon on the Mount

[19:20]

Now, I ask you sincerely. Do we really believe that what Jesus said is for us to do? You believe we can do it? Believe we should do it? Well, I mean, I collect sayings and things that people say about all of this, and I think the overwhelming sense is that we don't need to do it, and probably can't. And so then the Sermon on the Mount sits there, and at most makes people feel a little guilty, and if they get very, very serious they're apt to be driven into legalism. But they never come to terms with it.

Living Out the Sermon

And so now what we want to do this morning is try to talk about the Sermon in a way that it will become the substance of our teaching and of our lives. And in such a way that each of us will say yes this is for me. This is for me. And each of us will set our course to live out the things that Jesus is talking about. That we become the kind of person who would just do what he says. Not in the pharisaical way, but in the way of discipleship which moves us toward inward transformation, and the kind of inner life that leads us easily to do that.

OK? Are you ready for that now, because I mean if... I mean, there's enough people in this room to turn the world on its ear. Enough people in this room. But you're not going to do it with a slick plan of church growth. And you're not going

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to do it in any other way than by your own transformation and that spreading out to other people. That's the only way it works.

Outline of the Sermon “The Heart that Jesus Gives” [22:10-30:35]

<i>Lives Free from...</i>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>DC Lectures</u>
Anger & Contempt	5:21-26	#11 Start
Domination by Sexual Lust & Disgust	5:27-32	#11 @ 0:48:00
Domination by Divorce	5:31-32	#11 @ 1:08:00
Desire to Dominate & Control Verbally	5:33-37	#11 @ 1:09:10
	<i>See also</i>	# 9 @ 1:11:00
Grudges, Fairness Issues & Paying Back	5:38-42	#11 @ 1:09:30
<u>to Love Enemies & Bless the Cursing</u>	<u>5:43-48</u>	<u>#11 @ 1:11:20</u>
Performing for Human Credit	6:1-18	#12 @ 0:08:00
<u>Physical Substance</u>	<u>6:19-34</u>	<u>#12 @ 0:21:10</u>
Condemnation Engineering	7:1-16	#12 @ 0:29:40
Community of Prayerful Love	7:7-12	#12 @ 0:48:45
Discerning	7:13-23	#10 @ 0:06:50
Hear and Do	7:24-27	#10 @ 0:13:30

So now, before we get into the details of it, let's think about the whole sermon, and you can, you can think of this whole sermon as expressing the kind of heart that Jesus gives to people. And I like to... I like to address the whole sermon under the heading of “The Heart that Jesus Gives”. The Heart that Jesus Gives. And then as you go through the sermon you see different aspects of that showing up. We won't have time to do all of them. But I do want to cover the main points in the sermon, and so if you want to follow this breakdown now in terms of aspects of life that show up from this heart that is changed, the Kingdom heart, here's how it would go.

Matthew 5 — Free of anger and lust [23:07]

First of all you have presented lives that are free of anger and contempt. And that's **(Matthew 5:21-26)** And we'll talk about why we...why he gives us the order he does later.

And then secondly you have lives free from domination by sexual lust and disgust. Sexual lust and disgust. Free from domination by those. That is **Matthew 5:27 through 32**. Matthew 5:27 through 32. And if you have your text open there I think you can almost see the breaks as they come by.

Free from desire to control [24:00]

Then the third section is on being lives free from desire to dominate and control

verbally. Now that, we talked about that last night as an illustration. That's why he's talking about, Swear not. And I hope you remember now that's...he's not saying, Don't cuss. It's not about cussin'. It's about swearing. It's not even about profanity or filthy language. It's about using language in such a way that you don't just plainly state things and let them stand for people to respond to; you try to manipulate people by the way you put things.

Now that can be swearing or cussing too. Because you ask why people cuss, well, that's an interesting topic. You could do some good sermons and teaching on that if you think about it. Where they say things like, Jesus Christ. Well, what does that...what are they doing? You know. Why do they do that? Well actually it is a form of what Jesus is talking about. So that's in **5:33-37**.

Free from grudges

[25:15]

Then on the next section, section four, free from grudges, fairness issues, and paying back. Grudges, fairness issues, and paying. So if you look at **38-42** you'll see these are things like turning the other cheek and so on. Going the second mile, those are teaches, teachings about fairness, grudges, and paying back.

So, what he's presenting here is a heart that is free from that. It doesn't carry grudges. It isn't obsessed with what's fair and what isn't. That really hits people today because so much of our culture is devoted to fairness issues. Children very quickly learn about that, and try to use it, so that's a major thing that has to be addressed. And then of course paying back.

Free to bless enemies

[26:17]

And then the fifth section is on the heart that is able to love enemies and bless those who curse, and that is **5:43-48**. Now, that finishes chapter 5.

Matthew 6 — Two Main Sections

What's **chapter 6** about? Well, chapter 6 deals with two things, and I'm going to have less time to deal with these than any of the rest of it, I think, but actually I may change my mind on that before the day is over depending on how the discussion here develops. But chapter 6 has two main sections. One is... **6:1-18**.

1st Half — Free from performance orientation [27:00]

And that deals with performing for human credit. Performing for human credit. And the first section deals with doing good deeds, with praying and with fasting. And this issue of performance is a major one. But the Kingdom heart does not perform for human credit.

2nd Half — Free from trust in the physical [27:30]

And then the second half of the sixth chapter is about not trusting in physical substances. Really, that whole chapter is about trusting. One is trusting in your reputation. And the other is trusting in money. And so from 6:19 through 6:34 it's about trusting physical means or money, mainly. That's the one that concludes of course with the section about not being anxious about what you're going to eat, or what you wear, and so on. And has the great verse, "*Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else will be added.*" **(Matthew 6:33)**

Matthew 7 — Free from judging others [28:10]

The final section of the sermon, in terms of the heart that is expressed, is in chapter **7:1-12**, and we do want to try to spend significant time on that toward the end of the day. This is about not managing others by condemnation engineering. That's a word I...or a phrase I try to use to indicate how people try to get people to do things by judgment, and condemnation, and laying good stuff on 'em.

So we'll have to look at that in some detail, and we'll see how that moves out into the community of prayerful love. So, you have a section here that you go right from how you deal with others, into the life of prayer. That's really fundamental for understanding community life, especially in our churches. And that life of prayer then leads over in **verse 12 of chapter 7** to the great statement: "*Therefore however you want people to treat you, so treat them. For this is the law and the Prophets.*" Treat people as you want to be treated." Now, the therefore, we'll want to explain why that therefore is there. Because you move right from the life of prayer to how you treat others in the Kingdom of God.

And then the last section of the sermon all has to do with this business of doing it, and really warnings about hearing and not doing it. Now see, I hope you realize at this point... I hope you've thought the thought that we've actually established a culture of hearing and not doing. We've established a culture of hearing and not doing. Not just in our churches, but in the larger society. People here, they don't do it. And that's why life does not go very well.

And so those are the main divisions that we'd be looking at as we go on through the day, and with that we turn back to **chapter 5**. Now then.

Matthew 5 - Blessedness in the Beatitudes

[30:45]

Jesus' Approach

Why does he begin where he does? Why does it develop the way it does? The first thing you want to understand when you look at the Sermon on the Mount is that this is a master teacher, who knows exactly what he's doing, and therefore there is a reason why he orders things the way he does. That's why he starts off at the opening of the Sermon with the issue of who is blessed. Because who is blessed is going to determine how one behaves. We act for what is good in our eyes. And so the first thing that he has to discuss is who is well off, and...that covers those Beatitudes and what comes immediately after it. And shocking statements that he made, like, *"You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth."*

(Matthew 5:14)

Now we just pause over that for a moment, see, because that is often not thought to apply to me, and you. And so, here's a suggestion. I mean, put on your bathroom mirror, *"You are the light of the world."* You are the salt of the earth. And you say, well, Jesus is the light of the world. No, you can't get off that easy. You're the light of the world. Where you are, if you are not the light, there isn't going to be any light. That's your calling.

Now, one of the reasons why you have to understand the Beatitudes as taking a list of the humanly un-blessable and announcing that they too can be blessed in the Kingdom of God is because, if you don't understand that, then you won't know the connection between those next statements, where he announces to ordinary people, very ordinary people, in **verse 13 of Matthew 5**, *"You are the salt of the earth."*

And then he warns that salt can become tasteless. What they called salt in those days is not what we call salt. What they called salt in those days was more a kind of rock compound, and you could leach the salt out of it, and it would still be there. That's what it means there when it talks about salt becoming tasteless. The salt you have in your shaker can't become tasteless because it's pure salt. But the salt that they had in those days was not pure salt. It was a kind of rock compound, often limestone or other things, and you could actually leach the salt out of it, and that's what he's talking about here. And if it does loses its salt, you can't give the salt back to it, not in those days; they didn't have the technology for it.

It's good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot of men. **(Matthew 5:13)** They took it and would strew in a muddy place, to make a pathway where you could walk, like we would do with gravel today. And that's what he's saying here.

And then he goes on, You're the light of the world. **(Matthew 5:14)** You're the light of the world. Now, here he makes a different point, that a city that is set on a hill can't be hidden. What he's saying here is, being the light of the world, all you have to do is be the light of the world. You don't need to make an effort to be seen.

And no matter how dark it gets, darkness cannot put out a light. Did you ever know that? That's one of the interesting asymmetries between light and darkness. Light expels darkness. Darkness does not expel light. The darker it gets, the brighter the light shines. And that is true of a disciple of Jesus. That's why, when it gets dark, you can be proud and thankful to be a disciple of Jesus, and you can be assured that you don't have to announce that you are shining. Right? You don't have to announce that. You just shine.

And so, one of the things that Jesus is telling us here is we can put God in charge of our public relations. If we have the real stuff, it can't be hid. It cannot be hid. Now you see that comes together with the things that I've been hammering on here.

Obedience to Christ

[36:15]

The true ecumenism among Christians is obedience to Christ. We can have people now who work next to one another for years, and they both attend church and are professing Christians, but at work they never find out they're Christians. And you might be tempted to say, if you have a spiritual life that can be hidden, maybe it should be. Maybe it should be. That might be the best thing.

Jesus says, if you are the light of the world, where you are, that's your appointment. That's what God foresaw for you from the foundation of the world. That's a part of what's built into the idea of the Kingdom of God. Is that you did not take God by surprise. He foresaw the world in which you would be born, and the family, and all that goes into that world he had you in mind for that place from the foundation of the world.

So now that's your place to be the light of the world. How are you going to be the light of the world? You're going to be the light of the world by living out the Kingdom of God in that place. That's how you are the light of the world. You bring the Kingdom of God into that place, and you let it work.

Now, you...I would hope you would know, you would all know, because you're students of the Scripture, and we've talked about here what that means. What form that's going to take. You're going to be a person who does the right thing. Why do you do the right thing? Because you're a person of love, and because you live in faith, a faith in God that allows you to know that if you do the right thing,

God will stand with you. See that's one of the things that you learn as a disciple of Jesus.

Obedience to Christ - Life of Integrity

[38:30]

You never have to do anything wrong. You never have to do anything wrong. People who do not understand that always think, you know... People want to be good, but they're ready to do what's wrong, if necessary.

Now see that's the little clause. Did you ever hear the phrase, "Business is business?" When do people say business is business? When they're getting ready to do something wrong. Or at least something they believe is wrong. And they're going to say, well, we have to do it. We have to do it. That's when they say business is business.

And now, the Christian will always say, business is never just business. Could I get you to write that one down? Business is never just business. See there's a popular idea that you can't do business in a godly way, because you're always going to come to that point, where, business is business. That means that you're now prepared to trust yourself and your own devices and not God. That's what it means. At that point the light diminishes. And everyone says, *"Well, really you're just like everybody else."*

Life that glorifies God

[40:06]

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and say you are really wonderful. Did I misread that verse? "You wonderful." No, no. They're not...they're going to see your Father in heaven. That they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. They're not going to see your good works if you say all those words, like business is business, or whatever it is we do to explain why we find it necessary to do what we believe is not best or perhaps is outright wrong. They'll never see that light. It's when you stand there in the world, and you say, blessed are those who are facing unemployment. Not because unemployment is good, but because they too can live in the Kingdom of God, even if they're unemployed. Facing bankruptcy. Facing shutting down the business, or whatever. See.

Understanding Blessedness Is Crucial

[41:30]

So now, you have to have that solidly in place. The order of the Sermon is fundamental. And anyone who does not know where their blessedness is in the Kingdom of God is not going to be able to go on beyond the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee. Am I making any sense? That make any sense? Maybe I better say that again. You have to know where your blessedness is. Or when you

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come to deal with anger, you won't be able to deal with anger. You won't be able to deal with contempt, unless you know where blessedness is.

Because, for example, you'll say some people who fit certain categories are contemptible. You won't say, well, the Kingdom of God is over all, and it's over them too. And God made them, and called them. Now they may not...they may be in the category here of the salt that has had the saltiness washed out of it. And human beings can't restore that. But God can. And so that's crucial now to understand this order.

~ ~ ~ END of Session 10 @ 42:55 ~ ~ ~

~ 11 [Kingdom Living](#) [YouTube Link]

[1:21:00]

"The Sermon on the Mount" (continued) — Matthew 5:21-48

1st - Lives Free from Anger & Contempt

5:21-26

This is an intelligent man giving an intelligent address to fundamental issues. On the assumption Jesus was smart and knew what He was talking about...

Why does he start with anger? Anger is the most fundamental problem in human life if you are aiming to transform people. You have to start there.

Jesus is not writing a theory. He is founding a community of redemption. His project is to change people. The theory of love & laws are developing. That's not going to help a person in the guts of life caught up in their anger. You won't do well unless you've dealt with anger & contempt first. These statements of Jesus are ordered in a fundamental way.

Anger...

... is not wrong but very likely to lead to wrong. (Titus 1:7; I Co. 13)

... is will to harm. That's why you already feel hurt when someone is angry at you. We don't even like to be honked at.

...announces something needs to be changed. Anger is a kind of pain.

...is the will to push, move, harm. Being angry sets us on a course to harm.

Ecc. 7:9, "Anger reposes in the bosom of fools." Find a fool and find anger.

We need to think deeply about the nature of anger. Cross my will and I'm given to unrestrained anger and I will strike out. It is an insult to my kingdom. My will is being crossed. "The smallest thing will set them off." You have a will in a certain condition.

...is not a sin. It is natural like pain but only rock solid Christian character can keep you safe with anger. God got angry. Jesus got angry. I can trust Jesus with stuff I wouldn't trust myself with.

...is not the best way to handle situations. Anger evokes anger. Not talking about repressing anger or denying anger. We're talking about not being angry.

If War is necessary, in some circumstances anger & contempt are not. Warfare conducted in anger & contempt is many times worse.

Everything you can do with anger you can do better without it. Living without anger is a way of re-educating people around you.

...is dangerous because it's always righteous in the moment. Rarely are we angry without feeling like we are completely justified. Anger justifies what they do. Angry feelings don't raise the question, "Am I right?" Thoughts & beliefs do that. Feelings say, "I want this!"

...is in our body. We farm character out to our bodies. It easily bypasses our mind and spirit if we are not well formed. We will act in anger before we think.

Mean Christians. Where do you train as a Christian to deal with anger?

"Angry...Raca...You fool...fires of Gehenna (not Hades)."

Jesus is putting a pretty heavy weight on stepping out of anger. The reason we have so many angry Christians because they are not trained out of it.

Anger - Stepping out of Anger

[21:05]

Since anger is a "Will Phenomenon", that is where you have to begin.

Stepping out of anger presupposes you have surrendered your will to God. You don't have to have your way. Surrender to the will of God effects a pervasive change in all of our lives. This is the meaning of the Cross in spiritual growth and redemption. Jesus did not die on the Cross that we would not have to die on the Cross but that we would join him in His death on the Cross. *"I am crucified with Christ."* What does that mean? I have given up my life to God. I have laid it down.

* William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* [23:15]

"If you complain, it is because you lack a right belief in God. The greatest saint in the world is He who is always thankful to God who wills what God wills and receives everything as an instance of God's goodness and has a heart always ready to praise God for it. All [prayer, devotions, sacraments, ordinances] are so many means to render the soul to the will of God and fill it with with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God."

What about things that are wrong?

[25:50]

We can still act. We speak truth and live it but we don't do it with anger & contempt because we know that He is taking care of us. Our interests are safe. [\[Kingdom living\]](#) * Someone parking in your parking space.

- If you confront without anger, he may get angry. You remain calm.
- If you confront with anger, it provokes more anger that feels justified.
- You entered a relationship with the person you confront.

This is the kind of work you have to do if you are going to understand anger and how to get out of it. You have to understand people have to be drawn.

You are being called to *Responsible Humanity* - You think in terms of relationships not in terms of acts, much less tit for tat.

* Firing someone in Christian love

You maintain the relationship and that is a part of recognizing the care of God and the supervision. As angry as I may be, in a sober moment I realize God loves that person. If I'm going to relate to them, I have to be in a position to recognize God cares for them and cares for me.

With this in place, not getting what you want is not a big deal. Anger always comes when you make it a big deal. If it has meaning other than "I want my way."

Because you are not angry, you don't evoke the angry emotions from the other side. You get some anger from others but you stand steady and let them work their way out.

That's the meaning of **The Cross** - "There is life outside this event."

The disciple of Jesus living in the Kingdom has learned no matter what the event is, there is life outside the event.

Contempt - Twin of Anger; Find one and the other is close by. [33:16]

Contempt = Regard one as less worthy or worthless. It is easier to harm them or be angry at them.

* Racial conflict - The other race is worthy of harm or loss.

If you have contempt, you are less likely to grieve over them or help them. "They deserve it."

Filthy language is always an expression of contempt. Makes anger easy. It issues from anger. Built into the nature of anger is to flow into contempt.

Learn to Live Without Contempt - The answer to contempt is love. You can't have contempt for things that you love. We can give up the right to have contempt for people. You can give up the "right to be contempt, to be anger." A great moment for our own spiritual growth is when we give up the right to be angry. I abandon contempt. I have to learn to act against wrong without being angry.

- Study "Anger" and "Angry" inductively in your Bible. It has to come out of the Bible. If it's not Biblical, we don't want it. Knowledge of reality and what is good and right. It is not a rule book or a theological treatise. The Bible is a window on life. You study it and it emerges from it the profound teachings that we need. You won't study it unless you take Jesus and Paul when they say lay aside anger.

[I abandon anger and contempt by surrendering my will, my future, my relationships, my way, my feelings, my wishes, my fears, my control by putting Jesus kingdom first and trusting Him for my entire life, destiny and eternity.]

The Positive Side of Anger & Contempt - Mt. 5:24-26 [39:33]

Jesus is contrasting the right attitude to the wrong attitude.

Teaches the kind of thing the person who has the right attitude will do.

* 1st Case - Interrupt the process of the ritual.

There is always a tendency in religious institutions to glorify the processes to such an extent that people wind up substituting ritual behavior for moral rightness.

Jesus is going counter to that. He is suggesting an outrageous thing. You would interrupt a ritual in the temple to do something "trivial" like go to make things

right with your brother. He is saying that to show what it is really like to not just not kill your brother but to really love. The tendency to substitute ritual behavior for genuine goodness & rightness is what Jesus is talking about.

* 2nd Case - A new type of friendship - Mt. 5:25 [43:57]

- Make friends quickly with an opponent in a law suit.

A further illustration of the genuine heart of a kingdom person so far from killing them that if they go to court, they are friendly. Doesn't say you should not go to court, but you go to court in love. You be friendly. "Give him your coat also."

Suppose we just got that far? Do you see what it going to do to everything else?

If you pull anger & contempt out of pornography, how much pornography would you have left? Jesus understood the structure of the immoral life. He pulls the foundations out from under it.

2nd - Free from Domination of Lust, Disgust & Adultery 5:27-30 [48:00]

So Jesus takes up this topic now in terms of the act of adultery and goes to the heart. He says, I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman to lust... (Matthew 5:28) And if your version reads and lust would you please mark it mark the and out; I'll give you time to look because this is such an important matter. The language here is very clear; it does not say, looks and lusts, but, looks to lust.

Have an NIV? What does it say? Looks lustfully - so that is and . So you check our Greek, do your sources on this.

This is a particular kind of thing that is often done. For example, apparently there were construction workers in Jesus' day! Now then this has spread to television commercials. You know the Pepsi commercial that has the young women standing in the window and the construction worker with his shirt off having a Pepsi.

So this is the familiar sort of thing. It is looking to lust. And you need to understand in this matter because you can easily enslave yourself to things that you think are wrong that aren't.

You need to distinguish **1) "thought of sin" from 2) "inclination to sin" (that's temptation) and 3) "readiness to sin"**.

Adultery in the heart is three, it's number three. It is not temptation, temptation is not sin, and it is not thought, thought is not sin. Adultery in the heart is manifested by three, and it is manifested by cultivating desire. When you look to lust you look in order to lust, and that manifests three. By not just having to, but rather inciting to, purposefully to enjoy dwelling on that.

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So now we have to talk about why does one do that sort of thing. For the most part it is just a habit. It feels good, we enjoy titillation, we enjoy imagining things we might like to do, even if we wouldn't do them; and so this habit of indulging feeling becomes a major part of how we get through life. It's a part of that turn to the body that we discussed earlier especially in relationship to Romans 1, because it is a source of gratification and good feeling.

Actually I think anger and contempt become that for a lot of people; they actually feel better when they are enjoying being contemptible of others, because it gives them a kickback effect; they feel superior and that's a good feeling. It is all a part of the sensualistic approach to life where feelings are treasured, and often people live in imagination just because they enjoy that and perhaps they don't have any sources of satisfaction. They are not experiencing success and drama in their life, and so they get it out of what we call sex and violence.

How do we leave "cultivating lust"?

[53:00]

So now leaving it, leaving cultivating the lust, you make the decision to go no further than one. And in fact you try to train yourself to avoid one as much as possible. If it happens, it is not a sin; it is not something that is wrong - it is just that you need to know when you move there, you move away from it, you don't go further with it.

So now how do you do that?

1.) It's very important to decide not to do it. We are not going to do this. Now it isn't like the law of gravity where you can't escape it and many people seem to talk that way. But if you will experiment with it, you will find, just like covetousness and other things, you don't have to be drawn into it. And your world presently, of course, is just soaked with it so you have to recognize that and say, I am not going to be a part of that.

2) The discipline that I call chastity, and I discuss it in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*- it is not a good name for the discipline; it is more a name for the outcome of the discipline - is something you can learn to do.

You can train yourself to live with thoughts successfully, by choosing to simply - avoiding them for a period of time.

You don't have to dwell on sexuality in relationships. You can actually train yourself to think about life and relationships in a way that doesn't involve that. But you have to break habits and most of us have habits that run in the other direction, so that is a project.

3) It will help you in doing that if you indeed decide to view the person you encounter an - and here we go back to language we have already used - **An**

unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe. Your view of them will be lifted and lifted in such a way that you will not have the same inclinations in relationship to them and whatever thoughts that occur will be dismissed.

Now then this condition is what could be called sexual purity. And I don't know if you have a way of spelling that out, or if in your circles people aren't apt to talk about it very much, but you need a way of thinking of about what sexual purity is; and that does not mean that you are asexual or that you don't have thoughts of sex, or appropriately engage in it if you are married, or that you aren't a sexual being. That's right.

But sexual purity means that you are not enslaved and accustomed to degrading yourself in that relationship, or degrading others, because it always comes in that way.

4) Now, we can also help ourselves here by training ourselves to take the initial signs which we used to use to get ready to cultivate your lust, as signs to bless, to help, to pray for...that should be, for the person in question.

As long as you engage in these activities you are not going to have trouble with the others, but you have to train yourself to do it and learning to **see people as unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's great universe**, opens the door then to doing these other things and using the customary signals that one might have used, let's say the proverbial construction worker would use, to just turn the other way. And we can train ourselves to do that.

Now then, let us go back further. Since we have already surrendered self-will, getting what you want, you will not feel deprived. See, many... The way the world runs, a person is apt to say, "Oh, I am being deprived if I can't do this, I am missing something important, I am missing something good."

Now you have to get out of that; you are not missing something good; you are missing something that is harmful and can lead to much worse things. **So the surrender of self-will has to lay the foundation not only for anger but ceasing to cultivate lust. Abandoning that. It all hangs together** and I hope that is one of the things you will see as you go along.

The Process of Change

Now then, what do we do as Christians, well, we train ourselves; and then if we are leaders and we are leading a group of disciples who want to be done with anger and with all of this other stuff, then we train them in the things that we are talking about right here today.

And we don't treat things - life, anger, and contempt and sexuality - as if they were sort of peeled grapes that it is impossible to pick up, and as slippery and as incapable of getting ahold of; because now we have thought about it, and we have teaching about it, it may have struck us that actually Jesus knows something about it and has something to teach us about it. And then we are ready to act. And in our groups and in our lives individually we can begin to take steps to change that inside the mind, the will and the feelings in such a way that we are able to do the things that Jesus said.

You know, that is crucial if what I have said to you is right, we have to grow in grace by our own actions as well as receive that grace from God, so we have to know what to do, so we don't just say, Oh, I've failed again, I am going to try harder next time. We don't say that; we say, How did that happen, and we have to go through all the stages.

We have to have the vision that it is okay if I didn't do that, it would be okay if I didn't engage in that. My ears wouldn't fall off. I'd still be a human being; it's okay. Then we go to the stage of decision, saying, I am going to be that way. And then we get into these details and we do whatever is necessary in addition to the sorts of things I've talked about to help us become a different kind of person on the inside.

So then, agape love is the sure answer to lust. What you love you will treat lovingly, but you have to understand the details and see what goes into that.

Spiritual Disciplines & Change - Principle of Indirection [1:00:50]

Spiritual Disciplines and Change

Now, then, just finally here, let's go back to disciplines, because we've talked about the vision, the intention, and the means; and we have to say that when you come to implement this, for example, dealing with anger, you are going to have to think in terms of disciplines that will help you change.

Remember the principle of indirection which I talked here again about. You are becoming different inside, and you have to do the things that change you; so solitude and silence and fasting and study, all those things inside, you engage in those without asking the question directly of, How is this going to change me? Will it modify my behavior?

Change from the inside

It will modify your behavior, but remember you don't aim at modifying behavior;

you aim at changing the insides, and then when the insides are changed the behavior changes. Disciplines enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort - so you cannot stop cultivating lust by trying to stop cultivating lust. You cannot do it. You have to go through the process of understanding and habit change, habits of envy, other relational - see, those have to change from the inside.

So you can't do that by direct efforts. So disciplines enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort. So we just go into solitude, we go into silence, we practice worship, we change all of those attitudes that lead us into degrading positions and then we are no longer there.

Change through worship

And worship is a tremendously important - genuine worship, admiration of God, astonished reverence of God; that is a good word for worship, is astonished reverence for God.

Many of our songs express those, some we don't know any longer, but if you go back and read a lot of the old hymns; maybe you know the old hymn Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise- that is a tremendously powerful, theological song. It exalts God in such a way that the back effect is to change us.

John Newton's old hymn:

How tedious and tasteful the hours when Jesus no longer I see. / Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers have all lost their sweetness to me. / The midsummer sun shines but dim, the fields try in vain to look gay / But when I am happy in him, December's as pleasant as May. / His name yields the richest perfume and sweeter than music his voice. / His presence disperses my gloom and makes all within me rejoice. / I would were he always this night, have nothing to doubt nor to fear. / No mortal's as happy as I, my summer would last all the year.

You see, that is worship. Now when you are living there, that changes you.

Change through study

Of course, study has to go with worship, inform the mind. The emotions and the mind come together and so we come to the position that you see expressed in Psalm 16:8, if you remember that great Messianic Psalm, and in 16:8 David says: I have set the Lord always before me, he is at my right hand, I will not be moved.

That's discipline, that's what the disciplines do, and they work by indirection, and they are not aimed at behavior but the changes come in behavior. So solitude and fasting, and so on, have tremendous effects on these areas of anger and lust.

[1:05:25] I want to read you a letter here from a young lady who had been experimenting - under direction, she had been experimenting with fasting and solitude, and the effect it had on her. A young Japanese woman, actually; and a friend of mine had gone from Fuller Seminary over to do some work there teaching in Japan, and this young lady gave this testimony, just listen to these beautiful words. She said:

"The more I practiced this discipline of solitude and silence the more I appreciate their strength, and the less I become judgmental and skeptical; and the more I learn from them the more I accept things I didn't really like about others. The more I accept them as uniquely created in the image of God, the less I talk, the fuller are words spoken at an appropriate time. The more I value others, the more I serve them in small ways. The more I enjoy and celebrate my life, the more I celebrate the more I realize God has given me wonderful things in my life and the less I worry about my future. I will accept and enjoy what God is continuously giving me. I think I am beginning to really enjoy God."

The effects of change

That is how disciplines work. The disciplines that are tried and true in the life of the biblical people and more recently, always have the effect of changing the whole sense of life and the sense of God so that you are no longer driven by feelings, by hungers, by needs, and so on, because you are centered in the sufficiency of God.

Summarizing the Sermon

Now, we need to say a little more about chapter 6 of the Sermon; well, let's not go there directly, let's finish up chapter 5, just quickly. I've talked about these two main topics of anger and contempt on the one hand, and cultivated lust; but then as you go on through that sermon and culminate at the end where it is talking about being perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect, because now you love those who hate you, and your enemies, you love them.

3rd - Free from Divorce - 5:31-32

[1:08:40]

He goes through a series of things here affecting not only divorce- because you see, if you have already dealt with anger and contempt and cultivated lust, there is not going to be much of a problem with divorce, because divorce without anger, contempt and cultivating lust will almost never occur.

There may be some other reason, but normally they come out of those conditions, but then he goes on to talk about what we discussed last night, namely, letting your yes be yes and your no be a no, and then he moves on to retaliation.

4th - Lives Free from Desire to Dominate & Control Verbally [1:09:10]
Matthew 5:33-37

He goes through a series of things here affecting not only divorce- because you see, if you have already dealt with anger and contempt and cultivated lusting, there is not going to be much of a problem with divorce, because divorce without anger, contempt and cultivating lusting will almost never occur.

There may be some other reason, but normally they come out of those conditions, but then he goes on to talk about what we discussed last night, namely, letting your yes be yes and your no be a no, and then he moves on to retaliation. [See Session #9 - Church Communities - 1:11:00-1:24:30]

5th - Lives Free from Grudges, Fairness Issues & Paying Back [1:09:30]
Matthew 5:38-42

The old law said you could have an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth. Actually that was a merciful law because it was a rule that if someone knocked out one of your eyes, you couldn't knock out two of theirs, same with teeth and so on. It was a way of restricting revenge. Now if you have already taken care of these earlier issues, then you will be ready to deal with the retaliation.

Now Jesus says, don't resist those who are evil and I hasten to say this is talking about a personal relationship. Don't resist them in the way they are attacking you. So, if someone slaps you, don't slap them back. Remain vulnerable to them.

Now if you are a person who is operating out of your own desires and anger you won't be able to do that and there are all sorts of ways of responding to that. Everyone has heard the person who says: Well, I will turn the other cheek and then I will knock their head off.

Now that is thinking legalistically; that's like the person who has to go a second mile - well maybe the person doesn't want to go a second mile and you say, Well Jesus told me go the second mile so I have to carry your load on down the way. You don't go about it legalistically; you think about it in the terms of the spirit of Jesus, the realities of the Kingdom, of how love works, and then these things begin to fit in place.

6th-Heart Able to Love Enemies & Bless those Who Curse 5:43-48 [1:11:20]

You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. It is interesting in this case, verse 43, you can't get, Hate your enemy, out of the old law, so it isn't quoted. The part about love your neighbor is quoted, but, Hate your enemy, had actually

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been added on by the time of Jesus, as a requirement, you should hate your enemy. And that is something that still is in the world today.

But Jesus says, Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, in order that you may be the sons of your Father in Heaven. (Matthew 5:44) That means in order that you can have the nature of your Father in Heaven. So it will be children, children inherit the nature of their father.

Here is what he does: He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. That is what he is like. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have. (Matthew 5:45-46) In other words, what's the big deal about that, if you love those who love you. And he goes on to say, Everyone does that. If you greet your brothers only, what do you more than others. Even the Gentiles do the same thing. The Gentiles, remember, are those who do not know God

How am I going to do all this?

[1:12:50]

Now I am piling stuff on here, and I know it gets a little heavy because you start thinking in terms of, how am I going to do all of that. Someone comes, give unto him that ask of you, to him that would borrow from you, don't turn them away. Give them what they want. Can we actually do that?

Well, again, we can't if we are living on our own resources and all we know is controlling things so that they come out the way we want them. If we have abandoned that, there will be cases where people will ask you for something and they will have no claim on you at all, but you will give it to them, and you will not base it on some prior claim but simply on their need; and basing the giving of something just on need is a characteristic that you will see in people who have learned to live in the Kingdom of God.

Responsibility

Now you are going to make a law of it? I hope not, because sometimes there will be other claims on things you might give to a person. I had a case a couple of weeks ago, a man who was asked for some money and the money he had was devoted the bills that he already owed. Should you give that money to people who asked you? Well, he was torn by that and he stepped into the situation in a way that he was bothered by the legalism of it and he did give the money, and God did give him what he needed to pay the bills.

But see, you are going to have to make a judgment about this, and when you look at all these things, like turning the other cheek and remaining vulnerable, about giving to those who ask of you, going the second mile, you do not abandon your

responsibility to make a judgment about what you have to do and foist on these teachings a legalism that says you always do exactly that.

Love

See this is describing a circumstance where you are growing in your understanding and there will be occasions when you do this. And in fact, probably in most occasions you will do it. But there will be occasions when you don't do it, now when that is true, what will be the reasoning? The reasoning will be that love obliges you to do something different.

Self defense is a legitimate thing. What is not legitimate is to simply give back what you got; because he hit me, I hit him. Self defense merely to defend yourself, no. There has to be a larger issue.

The Teachings of Jesus

So you have to think these things through and the only alternative (and this is what has happened to the teachings of Jesus, over and over again, through the ages) the only alternative is to turn these into laws and then they will paralyze you because you actually won't know what to do, because often they will force you into conditions of conflict.

So you have to then say, well, I understand that these are practical teachings and the principle that Jesus teaches on is to contradict the prevailing assumption. So the prevailing assumption is what? You don't give to people just because they ask you, right? You give to people because they have some prior claim on you. When people hit you, you hit them back, right? And that's right and proper. No, Jesus says that is not the way it goes.

You have to take this teaching along with what we said about in Luke 14 yesterday. Was it yesterday? You will remember the talk about taking the seat out in the kitchen and waiting for someone to call you up, or the teaching about, when you have a dinner, don't invite your neighbor and your relatives.

So you have to understand that in these teachings Jesus is contradicting the prevailing assumptions about what you do and He is saying that for the child of the Kingdom there will be many circumstances in which you will go contrary to those assumptions because you are alive in the Kingdom.

Disregard rule systems

Now we have to go over this slowly and give it time to sort of soak in because I think this is a hard lesson, because we keep wanting Jesus to just tell us what to

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do. So we will even take something like, for example, don't call people fools, and we'll try to make a rule out of that.

And you can never catch the reality of the Kingdom in a set of rules. I know my grandmother would not allow me to call my little playmates fools. Well, I solved that problem quickly, I said I'll just think it! Do you think I satisfied the rule? Well, if you interpret it legalistically I did, I didn't call them fools, I just thought it. It didn't say, Don't think it, did it, it didn't say that, right, I guess I can think it then.

Now see, if you take these teachings and try to make them rules of righteousness you will always fail. They will become impossible to do and you will make Jesus look like he is an idiot.

If, on the other hand, you understand that he is talking about having a certain kind of heart which may well, out of love, go exactly contrary to what is treated as righteousness: go the mile you have to, don't hit someone unless they've hit you and then you can hit them back, don't give to people who have no claim on you, if you have an enemy hate him real good. Well, that's not where you live when you live in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:48 - *"Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."* [1:19:25]

So that is what He is really coming to, when he comes to the end here he says, Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect. That has caused many people a lot of trouble and I think you need to understand the word *teleo* there does not mean legal perfection; it means functional completeness. It means function in love and in Kingdom reality as your Father in Heaven does.

It does not refer to legal righteousness, perfect adherence to the law. Give up on that one. You'd never do that and it is a good thing you didn't because if you did you would be overwhelmed with pride.

So when it is talking about being perfect it is talking about growing into the language we used last evening from Ephesians, Paul's language, growing into the fullness of humanity in Christ. **Ephesians 4**. Now a child, for example, can be a perfect child, and be a perfect teenager, that's a little hard to conceptualize, but still, as people grow they are perfect all along the line, though they have much growing to do. And that is the kind of purpose driven completeness that Jesus is talking about.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 11 @ 1:21:00** ~ ~ ~

"The Sermon on the Mount" (continued) — Matthew 6 & 7

Jesus Teaching

He didn't preach sermons as we would understand them but he did have unified discourses. He had people think about it. "Maybe sometimes you should not resist evil." What do you gain if you take his eye? You need your eye. I care about you.

Jesus' teachings are designed to draw you off your familiar ground.

They push you out of the ordinary human actions and put you in a different basis.

- * If you slap me and I slap you, we know where to go from there. If you slap me and I don't slap you, then what do we do? Now we have to rethink the whole situation.

["Loving kindness leads to repentance." When someone is kind in the face (slapped face) of a mean spirit, it stops the offender in their tracks and makes them re-think what they were thinking. It "leads them to repentance" = thinking about their thinking. Metanoeto = "Reflect differently after with".]

- * If someone asks for something they need, they will give you a song and dance. They will try to cook up something that will hook you in and get you to answer their request. Suppose you said, "No, you don't need to that. You ask for it, you need it, I have it, I can give it to you." No song and dance.

[Imagine how this would redesign fund raising]

You are rewriting all the scripts human beings have worked up for managing their way and getting what they want. Now you step outside of that and say there is a bigger thing going on here [the Kingdom] than you getting what you want. You introduce them to that by how you respond to them.

- * If someone wants to sue you - That's going to shift the ground on which we stand. I sued you, I took one of your garments by process of law. You need some clothing. The human way is, "No, I'm not going to give you anything." You are not standing on human ground, you're standing somewhere else. You give them the 2nd garment.

You don't force your second garment onto them. You have to supply the context of the need of someone who has sued you by the process of law. You're operating out of the Kingdom of love and if it is appropriate, you would give it to them even though they had sued you and taken away your other garment.

This is a large shift not picking over a bunch of little laws. The laws given won't cover the expanse of real life.

There is not a single situation you have to deal with that is not affected by a shift into the Kingdom.

You have to learn to read this rightly or it'll drive you nuts. You'll go crazy trying to keep these laws. They are not laws. They are an expression of a kind of life. You get this kind of life and then these are characteristics - kinds of things you

will see happening. They will all have the mark of not obeying the usual human way of manipulating and controlling kingdoms. That's what you're stepping out of.

Matthew 6

[8:00]

Part I - Reputation - Mt. 6:1-18 - God's Kingdom People or Our Kingdom

And as I've said, Jesus starts with these more fundamental things about anger, and cultivated lust, and so on. **But it all comes down to these day to day little things, where we have to make decisions, and the choice is, who are we going to be? Our kingdom people? Or God's Kingdom people?**

Well, let's look briefly at chapter 6 now, and I'm not going to go in as great detail here as I have in the previous ones. I think the points are little most - a little simpler - though much, just as important.

And I said earlier when I was outlining all of this that in chapter 6 verses 1 through 15, sorry, 18, you have teaching about not performing for human consumption. Not trying to do things because it will impress people.

Church Performance

I didn't say much about this last night, but that's one of the biggest problems in our churches, is performing to impress people. And often it's done for what is regarded as good ends. We want to keep people coming back, so we want to have a good service. And a good service normally means one that they will enjoy.

And now, you know there's nothing wrong with enjoying a good service. There's much that's right and good about enjoying a good service. But the object of the service is not to have people enjoy it. See, the object of the service is to bring them closer to Christ, and more fulfilled in the kind of life that is Christ. That's the object of the service. It's to bring people to God. It's to honor God. It's to worship God.

And so those are legitimate means, legitimate ends for us to be doing. But they don't always coincide with pleasing people.

And it shocks people sometimes to hear it said, but when you watch how people get in to consuming services and judging them as to whether they're good or bad, you suddenly realize that very often the mode of being that church services have is theater. That what is actually happening is a performance is being put on.

That becomes very grinding to the people who have to do it, when they realize that, and they realize they're just having to put on a performance. And I think one of the things that we have to do, if we're going to use our times together as disciples of Jesus in a way that's really profitable, is to reject that idea that we're performing.

In chapter 6, you have three main areas where there's apt to be performance.
[10:30]

#1 - Alms - "*Practicing your righteousness to be noticed by men*"

And the first of those is, well, here it's called doing your alms. Practicing your righteousnesses, and Jesus says beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed of them. Otherwise you'll have no reward with your Father which is in heaven.

Now notice the problem is not being noticed by people. That's OK. That's not a problem. It isn't a problem that people notice you doing things. What is a problem is doing things to be noticed. To be noticed. So this is a strategy that someone has more or less adopted, a plan of action, and what they're concerned about when they give and when they pray and when they fast and so on, is that people should be noticed. And see that's human kingdom stuff. When I do that I'm running my show. I'm saying, I have...I'm taking control of things here. I'm going to do this, and I'm going to get that result. And so, in those days there were really pathetic lengths to which people went to get noticed. And sometimes having people who would blow a trumpet and call attention to the fact that I'm about to do something wonderful.

But Jesus - that's what's talked about in verse two here, When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you. (Matthew 6:2) People actually did that! Imagine you're walking along the street and here someone needs some money, and you have someone standing there with a trumpet. Everyone notice! Dallas is about to give some money to this person. Well, maybe we will...we don't do that, but there is a great temptation to make sure we get noticed.

The Discipline of Secrecy

Now, on the list of disciplines that I put up you may have seen the discipline I call secrecy. And secrecy is actually the practice of doing things in ways that they are not noticed. And why is that? That's to break anyone of the habit of needing to be noticed. It isn't because of something good about being secret, or something inherently bad about being noticed.

But the discipline of secrecy, and if you care to follow out more on that you'll find it discussed in, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, but you don't need it because I can just tell you what it is. It is the practice of doing things in ways that people do not notice. And the purpose of it is to free you up from being dependent upon the approval and disapproval of other people. So you practice not being observed. And that helps break the habit of needing to be observed.

#2 - Praying & #3 - Fasting

[13:45]

Now, Jesus goes on to talk about prayer, **praying to be seen of men and fasting to be seen of men**. We're...we really have a problem here with fasting. Many people when they start to fast do think that others need to know. Well, if it's your wife who's cooking a meal, or your husband who's bringing home food or maybe cooking a meal himself, they need to know, because you don't want to - they get the food on the table and you say, well, you know, I'm fasting. Not a good thing.

And indeed you know the old desert fathers and mothers, they had it all worked out, that if you were in a fast, and a person came to visit you, you would break your fast. And you'd prepare food. And you wouldn't prepare food for them and sit down and say, well you know I'm fasting, so I can't eat. No, you would eat with them. Even though you were fasting. See that, that's...they understood very well that disciplines are not righteousness. They're not law. They're wisdom. And so they understood that it was more important to be hospitable and loving than it was to carry on with your disc... You can start again. You can start again.

And actually if you go too far with it, you may have...you may need something to help you with your pride. I don't know how many people I've known who have set out say to have a 21-day fast. I'm not sure why that number seems attractive. And they're just about to get there, and then suddenly Aunt Mabel arrives from Cleveland on the eighteenth day, and they have to break their fast. I think that's actually probably a mercy from God, to help them be humble.

But the thing is that fasting isn't something that we present to God or others as a big deal. It's something we might do before the Lord, and we fast unto him, not unto people. And then when we do that, he interacts with us in a different way.

I haven't talked too much about fasting. The primary function of fasting is to align ourselves with the Kingdom of God. It isn't to convince God he ought to do what we want. It isn't to put him into a corner, or drive him by the glowing merit we achieve by fasting and denying ourselves. The purpose of fasting is to align ourselves with what God is doing.

And you see that if you read, if you study the Bible about fasting. See, I mean, Jesus in responding to Satan in Matthew 4 says that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Receiving from God

See, when you are fasting you are receiving from God. You're not just doing without food; you're receiving from God. You remember in John 4 Jesus was

waiting out there at the well, and talking with this lady, and as he waits, the guys go into town to get food and bring it out because they're going to eat. And they urge him to eat and he says, look, I have meat to eat that you don't know anything about. My meat is to do the will of the Father. (John 4:34)

And that's one of those things in Jesus' teachings where you have to figure out whether or not you think he's saying something that's realistic, or is it just pretty words. And I suggest that you should think that he was telling the truth. That he did have meat to eat that they did not know of.

Fasting is Feasting on the Kingdom

And so fasting actually turns out to be feasting. It's feasting on another world. And fasting affirms the reality of that world, and draws upon it to nourish one's body and give one strength. I don't have time to talk at length about this, but I hope you will again do your inductive studies of fasting, look at important passages like Deuteronomy 8 and others, and try to understand what it is. So it has a real function in aligning us with God. Its function is not to impress people.

Trusting People versus Trusting God

And so here are three things that Jesus pulls out to help with this teaching, because they're things that everyone knows about. And the people of his day was very conscious. You remember he said - we were talking about the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23? And you remember he said they do all that they do to be seen of men. And that's what we're not to do.

Well, if the men are the one who are supporting you, that's going to be a problem isn't it. If human beings are the ones that are making your work go, and they're always going to be involved, aren't they. And we need them.

But the point is, they're not what we trust. We trust God. We count on his Kingdom to be present with us, and of course that has the wonderful benefit of freeing us up from the need to please human beings. The Proverbssays, the fear of man brings a snare. (Proverbs 29:25) If one is living in dependence on human beings, then there's a natural fear and concern that they will desert you and leave you. The person who is living from the Kingdom of God is consciously in a position of saying, I love those who support me. I appreciate them, I thank them. But I do not depend on them. And that's important in things like giving to the church. We don't give to the church, because the church needs it. We give to the church in order to be a part of what God is doing. Should I say that again?

Or, a ministry. Someone with a ministry, and some of you probably raise funds. Well the people who give you funds, the reason they do that is not because you

need it. You have to remember that. The reason they do that is so that they can participate in the work of the Kingdom, that you are engaged with.

Now do you have needs? Yes you do. But in your needs you do not look to them. You look to God. And the Kingdom then steps in, and takes care of you, and you know who you're depending on, and who you're to be thankful for, and then in that context others will share the blessing that you have as a servant of the Lord. And if you read Paul's letters, for example, you'll see all of that laid out.

Part II - Wealth - Mt. 6:19-34 - Not Trusting Money & Physical [21:20]

How do you lay up a treasure in heaven? - God, Christ, Holy Spirit, People

Col. 3, "Seek those things that are above" - God and His kingdom

"Treasures in Heaven" means investing in God and perhaps in other people who are going there. Make your treasure God and He takes care of you, He provides the money. If you put your treasure in money, that's where your heart will be and the vision you have for life will be divided. You'll be looking at God and looking at money and not know which one to trust. We have to lay down our dependence upon money. We need money? Sure we do. We do not trust the sources of money that lie outside of God. We do not put ourselves in charge of that and have to make it work.

The irony of it all - this is the way to escape anxiety. You can't escape anxiety in any other way than what Jesus says about not performing and not trying to amass resources that will enable you to survive. The only way to stop being anxious is to lay that down. You recognize the care of God. You experience it as you go along. Sometimes you need to look back and see how it happened because we it is easy to forget.

Practice "The Discipline of Celebration" - Enjoying things in memory of the good God has done for us. (See *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.) "Counting your blessings."

"The person who really trusts God is no more worried about the future than he is about the past." (Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*) None of us sits up at night worrying about what's going to happen yesterday. We might have regrets, not worry. Why? You are in the presence of God who has provided in the past. The abundant care of God for others. You may ask for money. You may work. You don't worry because you're not trusting yourself or the money but the God who provides.

"For this reason, (God is in charge of money and reputation) *don't be anxious*" (Mt. 6:25)...for your life, for what you have to live on. It will come.

In the Lord's Prayer - "*Give us our daily bread for today (not for tomorrow).*"

God is going to be there tomorrow like He is today and the provision will come. It is hard to move into this because so many of us have very little experience with it - not having the resources when we need them and then there they are. We trust God day by day for the things we need and we go ahead doing the things we believe He wants us to do and the things He wants us to be. We count on Him for

the provision. That is what Jesus is talking about here. He is saying this is serious business. Look at the length of the material in his discussion of these things.

This is the only way you can live in faith in the goodness of God. You have to turn loose how you appear and turn loose gathering resources to depend upon where you are the one in charge.

[Mt. 6:33 - see p. 29 #3@1:11

Mt. 6:25-34 - see p. 32 #4 @ 14:00-28:30 [Seek First the Kingdom of God](#)]

Matthew 7:1-12 - The Non Condemning Community of Prayer [29:40]

7:1-5 Condemnation

One of the most challenging passages in the sermon as it has been given to us. They are about trying to get people to do things. They do that by condemnation. It's nearly always trying to get others to do good things. You come on to people, especially relatives. It's the heavy hammer to get them to do the right thing. Lay on the condemnation like we might lay on a whip trying to drive people into doing the right thing. Everyone knows that it just doesn't work.

Condemnation - A way of distancing people and putting them down. A form of disrespect, of contempt. Test it against the facts. Have you ever been condemned? Isn't it true you felt being put down? Less than you felt you were? Condemnation is not the same as **discernment** which is essential to human life.

* Dentist diagnosing a decayed tooth is discernment

But if he started slapping you and said,

"Who do you think you are to treat your teeth this way?" Condemnation

Discernment is essential in human life. Judgment is an expressed condemnation, an element of superiority, even contempt.

Jesus understood when you come with condemnation, you get it right back. Watch how that works in **families**. We've had a whole generation predicated on what Jesus is talking about here. The 60's generation discerned and condemned the older generation. The effect was counter-condemnation. It's a very serious problem - inter-generational conflict based on judging. Jesus is talking about a harmful attitude addressed to another often breaks over into anger.

* Politics - Level of judging. We need discerning politicians

How do you break the cycle? Try not judging. You can still use discernment.

* Today if you say a sexual practice is wrong, that is branded as hate speech. It may not be hate speech. You can not "discern" because it will be treated as judgment. We can't say, "I really love you and want to help you but you are wrong" because saying you're wrong says, "I don't love you, I condemn you" and you see the confusion.

What Jesus is saying to lay aside the attitude of condemnation like anger.

Anything you can do with anger you can do much better without it. I suggest to you the "log" is the attitude of condemnation. You have to get the log out. Once the log is out, you can see to remove the speck. That's the move from

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condemnation to discernment. Specks are not good things. You need help to get it out. Jesus is saying if you have the log of judgmentalism and condemnation in your eye, you won't be able to help people.

This passage teaches ways we try to help people that don't work. He's mainly addressing ways of taking a superior attitude. Once condemnation is out, people will allow you to help. If people are convinced you are not condemning them, they will allow you to help them in many cases where they wouldn't even begin to if they think you are coming in with an attitude of condemnation.

"Dogs & Hogs" (Matthew 7:6)

[41:00]

"Do not give what is holy to the dogs."

People who read this tend to concentrate on people who are "dogs" or "hogs". Thinking there are certain categories of people who are unworthy of your help. That should not waste your time on them. That might be true but I would be very careful with that. I don't think Jesus is classifying people as dogs. What He is talking about here is what people can profit from and can not profit from.

Dogs - If you lay your Bible down for a hungry dog to eat, what will happen? Is the Bible going to do the dog any good? The dog can not eat the Bible. That leaves the dog hungry. If you keep giving the dog the Bible, the dog will starve & die. You don't want to blame the dog. Dogs don't eat Bibles.

Hogs - They can not digest pearls.

[44:05]

But you say, *"they are very good pearls!"* So what, that doesn't help.

* Hogs will eat people. Jesus is teaching a very poignant truth about people. If you keep pushing stuff that people can not receive and does not help them, they are going to hurt you.

This is a passage about how to help people and not try to help people.

To help people we have to be close enough to them and love them enough to find out what will really benefit them.

John 3:17, *"I did not come into the world to condemn the world."*

Religious people relied on condemnation to get people to change. I don't think they'd ever seen it happen. I can honestly tell you i don't think I've seen anyone helped by being condemned.

We use un-forgiveness to get people to stop. It's a means of hazing people into doing the right thing. If I forgive, you might never stop. If I'm unforgiving, maybe you'll stop. Have you ever seen it work? I see more and more anger coming out of the situation. Jesus knew that it didn't work.

We have to get out of trying to make things happen. We take a different approach to things. It doesn't mean we let things that are wrong go or ignore people who need help. This is not what Jesus is talking about. We are expected to

help people. Jesus is teaching we can actually find a way of helping people that is not judgmental, that does not keep giving them good stuff that does them no good because they are not in position to digest it. There is a better way.

Matthew 7: 7-11

Community of Prayerful Love

[48:45]

“We are talking about prayer but not all prayer is to God.”

He is saying if you want to help people, ask them, talk to them, seek, but don't go at it in a condemning way. You can be persistent, that's allowed, but not condemning and not persisting in using over and over things the person you're dealing with simply can not benefit from.

“Ask...finds, Seeks...finds, Knocks...opens”

We have to remind ourselves that Jesus does not teach by giving us an absolute universal formula that will always bring down the result. He teaches by contradicting the practice in the first verses of the chapter. Now He says stop trying to manipulate people and go directly to them and ask. You can stay with them. You can knock - do it in a way that they have to hear that you are there. You don't have to become a non-entity in their lives. You can be a real presence. That is the way human beings are built to work.

Verse 9 - **Parent/child relationship.**

[51:00]

He is opening up a great cosmic theme of asking as a world order under God.

“When a child asking for a loaf, will give him a stone.”

“Asking” is a great power. People will avoid someone begging. It goes right to the heart of who you are.

* Ever eat a sandwich in front of a dog? The dog is asking for food. How do you feel? You'll either leave the room or give the dog some of your sandwich.

Jesus turns to the simple relationship between a man and his son.

* Daughters are even more powerful...on men. A daughter asks for a loaf and you give them get a cake! Guys are out of luck. Maybe you'll get a biscuit.

It is so beautiful and wonderful to see Jesus dip into the realities of human life as God has made them and bring out the teaching.

Verse 11 - *“If you then being evil know how to give good gifts...how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?”*

What's the continuum between human beings and God? When I go to Ask, Seek, Knock of human beings, I don't condemn them. I don't try to manipulate them. I take God with me and I bring Him into the circuit of Asking, Seeking & Knocking so when I come to request, I am simultaneously involving God in that.

[55:04] **PRAYER is “asking”**. Look at the teachings of Jesus. It's all about asking. Now, your relationship to God is not all about asking. That's what confuses many people. I have a relationship to Jesus and God that is greater than asking. People who don't understand prayer and the Kingdom, they get into this area of

prayer and say, "You don't want to ask anything for yourself, do you?." Imagine if you had a child like that? Thank God, children are spared from such crazy ideas as that. Children just ask. That's one of the greatest things about kids - they ask. They also curl up in your lap and say "*I love you, Daddy*" not to get something they want but just because they love you.

Our relationship to God is much bigger than prayer. But prayer is fundamentally asking and receiving and living in a relationship where that happens. [56:45]

Now, when I go to my friend, neighbor, I don't go to manipulate them, I go to ask, and as I ask, I ask God and bring God into that operation.

We have two ways of getting things done. Sometimes what we are after is so big, that it can't be left to us. [2 Types of Causation: On my own and needing help]

Lessons on Prayer [57:30]

* Simon Peter - **Luke 22:31-38**

"*Satan demanded permission to sift you like wheat*". (v. 31)

This teaches us Jesus and Satan were talking all along. Satan left for a season and came back. He's always talking.

"*I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and you, when once you have returned again, strengthen your brothers.*" (v. 32)

What's so stunning...Jesus prayed for him. He could have stopped him but he didn't stop him.

Most things we are concerned about in human relationships are too big for us to do on our own. That's why there is an arrangement of prayer.

* Weeds in your flower bed? Better not pray about that, you can pull those. Don't need to ask God to send an angel, do spiritual warfare. Just pull them!.

* If a brother is addicted, That's too much. Better pray about that one. Get God involved in that one. He knows what's going on. He knows what needs to be done in the right way and what can't be done.

* Someone unsaved? It's OK to talk to them. Don't try to manipulate them or grind them into the Kingdom of God by condemnation or pearls you have found because they can't possibly use. Go to God. Ask, Seek, Knock and go to them with God, not on your own. That's why there is such an arrangement as prayer.

What is Prayer? Talking to God about what we are doing together. [1:01:40]
[Prayer: [Grace in words through a relationship we do together, not on my own](#)]

Prayer is a way of engaging with God and bringing something to pass.

Prayer is staying with something. Pray, and keep praying. Stay with them.

Prayer is staying in action with the Kingdom of God.

* Power steering - You touch the wheel and the power takes over.

Benedictine "*When you're working, you're praying*". Praying is actually working.

Prayer is getting involved with the Kingdom of God and staying there.

Jesus' Teachings on Prayer - Matthew 6, Luke 11 & 18 [1:04:50]

Prayer works by bringing to bear the action of the one who is praying. When you pray for something, you really get involved with it and you stay there. You pour out your energy in prayer. As you do that, you will begin to see things happen. They won't necessarily be just what you had in mind. If you ask for a stone but you really want is bread, probably you'll get bread if you need something to eat. That's where the Kingdom of God takes over and directs the prayer. Jesus' teaching is always predicated on the idea that praying is asking. You get involved and stay there.

"Men ought always to pray and not give up." **Luke 18**

* The Widow and the Unjust Judge - The power of asking.

The widow's a nobody and the Judge is one mean guy, but he is a judge. The little lady has no pull on him. All she can do is ask. *"I'm going to give her the request lest she wear me out with her frequent coming."* This somehow applies to God. We stay involved.

The Visitor at Midnight - Luke 11 [1:07:30]

We stay involved, the same way with the story in Luke 11. You'll remember, this is the case of the guy who comes at midnight and says, I need some bread. I've a friend who's come to me, he was late on the road. Freeway was blocked up. He's hungry. I don't have anything to feed him. Give me some bread. (Luke 11:5-8)

Again, it's simply the power of the request. And the householder's in the house; the door is shut, he's in bed with his children. That's a story in itself, you know how they slept, I mean you get the kids down in a sleep. They sleep with you. You wake up, they wake up. They didn't have Schlaug locks on the doors; they had bars, it was a real operation to shut the door. The door is shut; the children are in bed with me. I can't. But he did.

Shamelessness

And why did he do it? Well, it's a very interesting term to try to translate there. But really, it's just shamelessness. That's that dog again. See the dog is utterly without shame. It just sits there and locks its eyes on you, no shame whatsoever. It just says, "I wanta, I wanta, I wanta, I wanta..." That's all it says. Utterly shameless. Dogs don't know any better. And this fellow that's asking doesn't know any better. He's just standing there. He's thinking about that guy back at the house. Doesn't have anything to feed him. He doesn't want to go back there and tell him that, he has nothing to feed him, and so he just keeps on standing there,

and pretty soon the man inside gets up and gives him what he asks for. This is one of the deepest teachings about the nature of the universe and of God. And prayer is the way that you enter into it.

Prayer and Community

Now, when you do that, then you transform everything in the community. It's no longer a battle of will against will. It's a process of coming to grips with things that are needed, and things that need to be said. But we put those requests in the context of our overall walk with God, and then our business is his business, and his business is our business. And that's the way we learn to stay in prayer in the community of love.

In asking, I recognize and welcome God's presence with me. I make myself present to him, and that's the nature of the asking. Just presence of one person to another. Now that's also, if I go to my brother or my sister, that I want them to change. I ask. I just make myself present to them.

Now what you'll observe often is when you do that they will not make themselves present to you because they're hiding. But the pressure is still there, and then you bring that under God, and you are waiting for God to move. And that's the context of change. That's what prayer is really about. Prayer is a way of allowing us to count. Prayer is something that God has worked out as a special arrangement. Just so that human beings can be free, and also can be significant.

There's a lot of theology here that's very harmful, and you have to work your way through it - if you want to call it openness or closedness or whatever it may be, the basic practical issue is, does God ever do anything in answer to prayer that he didn't intend to do in the first place? Or does he not do things that he intended to do in answer to prayer.

And here you need to read your Bible, and your biblical stories, but in the end it comes down to this: whether or not your praying makes any difference. Or is it just mood adjustment like a cocktail hour? See that's the way many people present it. Is, oh, you feel so much better if you pray. And you do, and it will adjust your moods. But the real issue is whether or not the universe is the kind of universe in which there is more to be done as a result of our prayers, than just what would happen anyway.

The Strange Arrangement of Prayer

[1:12:15]

Well, just a little comment here on why there is this strange arrangement. And it is an arrangement that allows us to learn to begin to be involved in what God is doing, and to make a difference. I said the other day that giving and prayer are

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the two baby steps in learning to act in the Kingdom. And this is really important to understand.

Prayer and giving are opportunities for the smallest, the most, the youngest, the smallest, to make a contribution that God can then act with. And acting with God is the secret of life in the Kingdom of God. This arrangement is one which allows one to step right in and begin to work with that, without allowing you to hurt yourself. And that's what we do in teaching and growing and every aspect of life with young people. We try to arrange things where they can begin to get involved without being hurt, without hurting others. And they grow and they learn, and they become more and more capable.

This arrangement allows one to step right in and begin to work without allowing you to hurt yourself. That's what we do in teaching and growing and every aspect of life with young people. We try to arrange things where they can begin to get involved without being hurt or hurting others and they grow and learn and they become more and more capable.

I mentioned here the case of the widow's two mites. **(Luke 21:1-4)** Now, I mean, think about that story. And if you remember Jesus is standing over against the offering plate I guess you'd say. Watching people put in their gifts. And people come by and putting in their big tax deductible checks. And here comes this little widow again. Why do you think Jesus pulls out widows so often? Something to think about, isn't it? Well, widows again were the people who had the least going for them in human terms. Blessed are the widows.

Now here's the teaching in this passage in Luke 21. Jesus said, This widow who has put in her...the mites, mites were the two smallest coins that were running. He said, She has put in more than all the others.

Now see, that's one of those statements that you read in the Gospels from Jesus that you don't really perhaps know quite know what to do with. Well maybe we should make a song out of that one. The widow with her two mites, and so on. But is it really true? Did she put in more? Or is it just flowery language, you know. Jesus was given to flowery language. He's a great poet. Right? He was that. See, that's like, I have meat to eat you know not of. Did he really? Did she really?

There used to be a slogan that Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, used, "Little is much if God is in it." See that's the insight that you need to understand the teaching of Jesus here. The widow actually did put in more, because what she put in more was with God. With God. And so the total of what came in for the Kingdom of God with her two mites was greater than all of what came in with the others.

The Lord's Prayer...in Kingdom language; *The Divine Conspiracy*, 269[1:16:00]

We need to understand that, and we need to take Jesus's great prayer, and put it in Kingdom language. It's beautiful the way it is; it almost feels sinful not to say "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." (Luke 11:1-4)

But wait a minute. What do you mean, "when in heaven"? And most people mean way off and way later. But that's not the Kingdom of God. What that really means, "our Father always near us." Our Father who art in heaven means our Father always near us, because the heavens are accessible to everyone, and everyone is accessible to the heavens.

Our Father always near us, may your name be treasured and loved. What does hallowed be thy name ? Most people never heard the word hallowed unless it's in the Gettysburg Address or the Lord's Prayer. What does it mean? Or, comes close in Halloween, doesn't it? It means treasured and loved. May your name be treasured and loved. May your rule be completed in us.

What does it mean to say, "Thy Kingdom come, your will be done here on earth just the way it's done in heaven."

"Give to us today the things we need for today, and forgive us our sins and impositions on you. In the way we're forgiving anyone who offends us. Please don't put us through trials, but deliver us from anything bad."

See, this is a child's prayer. Deliver us. Lead us not into temptation. Don't let us walk into trials. Say but well, I thought trials...you're supposed to be happy in your trials. You are. But, you shouldn't seek 'em. You should ask not to be put through trials. That's what Jesus is teaching.

Deliver us from everything that's bad. Because you're the one in charge. Thy Kingdom come. Thine is the Kingdom, thy Kingdom come, thine is the Kingdom. You're the one in charge. You have all the power, and the glory too is yours forever. And that's just the way we want it. That's what amen means. Means that's..."let it be that way". Now, if you really got into it, you might want to say whoopee instead of amen, and that would be OK. That would be permitted.

You see, prayer opens up the Kingdom and makes it possible for us to be present to others and present to God in a way that creates a wonderful community of love and non-condemnation. And that's how we can live together under God in the Kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is talking about.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 12 @ 1:19:15** ~ ~ ~
~ **END of Lecture Series** ~

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The Kingdom of God

Jesus taught mainly about the Kingdom of God where the Trinity is King
#1 @ 11:30

If you don't know the Kingdom of God, the human self will is all that is left. The cross is designed to help people see what self will does. What living as one's own king does. Looking at that, recognizing that and turning to God in Christ and giving up one's self will and live in the invisible kingdom of God which is now available.
#1 @ 1:02:00 (p.9)

The crucifixion is the center point of the revelation of the hidden kingdom.
Colossians "reconcile all things to Himself." #1 before 1:00:50

When you live in the Kingdom of Heaven as a disciple of Jesus, you are related to something greater than John the Baptist. Keep that in mind when you are thinking about your nature.
#2 after 1:02:15

That's what presented in the gospels over and over again. The presence of the Kingdom in the presence of the King Jesus. One of the deep sicknesses of our theology is that we preach a Jesus without a Kingdom. #2 before 1:15:20

Live in the Kingdom. Let the results take care of itself. I had to get out of God's way and let the kingdom work and count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom. This is one of the most important things for us to understand if we are to participate in the Divine Conspiracy if as leaders and ministers in the Kingdom to have confidence in the power in the Word of the Kingdom.

If someone wants to find the Kingdom, I should present Jesus to them. I should talk about Him. I should speak about the unspeakable riches of Christ. I should magnify Him and lift Him up and say the wonderful things about Him that are true of Him. That is the way to bring people to the point of understanding the Kingdom and to bring them to the point where they are prepared to enter the Kingdom of God. We must start with the nature of God because it is His kingdom. The Kingdom is a spiritual reality. The Word of the Kingdom is a spiritual reality - a life of it's own. Jesus said they have to eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:62)

3 @ Intro

Kingdom of God - Out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want.
3 @ 26:00

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Christ came to break God's Kingdom out of cultural captivity. Can one be a Christian and not a Jew (which emerged out Antioch of Syria in a group of non-Jewish Gentiles) which expanded to disciples of all nations. The system of mediation was set aside for one simple thing - Jesus. "There is one God and one mediator the man Jesus." All that is required is the presence of Jesus. The Kingdom is present with Him. You have Him, you have the Kingdom. God took the Kingdom of God out of a strictly cultural, institutional setting.

#3 @ 45:00+

The Kingdom of God comes and says, "Enter the Kingdom, live in the Kingdom, allow your lives to count for things that are good, permanent, enduring, lasting forever." That enables one to live on a different plain. That presupposes the Kingdom is real. That is not just imaginary. As you interact with the Kingdom, that carries you, gives you strength, gives you direction and that means power that has to be learned how to deal with.

#3 before 52:30

"The Kingdom is not in word but in power" Corinthians. The Word of the kingdom produces a kind of life or a results. Jesus is living in a personal reality which is the Kingdom of God. That's why we don't have mechanical results. It's personal and relationship.

#3 after 52:30

Conformed into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28ff). The hard things turn to our good when we have a vision of life in the Kingdom. We are carried forward by meaning of the drama of the Kingdom. "Drama" refers to the ups & downs of meaningful existence in the pursuit of good against opposition. Living in the eternal kingdom gives us this framework.

#3 @ 57:30

Kingdom followers do not stand on the Jewish proprieties (see Luke 16:16). They charge in.

#3 after 57:30

The Kingdom of God is manifested by a kind of righteousness or goodness, peace & joy that can only be supernaturally produced. The Kingdom of God is the announcement that God is here that anyone who wants to find Him can come through Jesus Christ and find the Kingdom of God.

#3 before 1:11:00

How do you seek the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33)? Find out what God is doing (the Kingdom) and do that. How? Observe Jesus Christ. Look at Him. Listen to what He said. Watch what He did. Now do that where you are and you will find the Kingdom of God and the kind of righteousness that God has. When you find that everything else you need will be provided.

#3 @ 1:11:00

The understanding was (is) that the Kingdom will be a political, social kingdom.
"Will you restore the kingdom to Israel?"

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One has to be an ontologist - understand "being" to understand the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's ruling, reigning - His governing, His acting. The Kingdom of God is the Person of God and the instrumentalities by which He rules - His Son, Spirit, Angels, His Word, His Church. #4 Intro

The biggest threat to the Kingdom of God is my kingdom and the kingdom of darkness. #4 Intro

You make a disciple by ravishing people with the Kingdom. Once you understand the Kingdom, discipleship is the greatest opportunity you'll have in life.
#4 @ 28:30

A True Disciple is a full time student in the Kingdom of God. #5 @ 21:55

Lift Jesus up in all of His glory and with Him comes the Kingdom because He is a great King. #5 after 30:45

Discipleship = from running our own Kingdom to bringing our whole being into the presence of God often one step & part at a time. #5 @ 45:00

Any work can be done in a spirit of love in the power of the Kingdom. I'm an Apprentice in Kingdom Living. He is the Master in the Kingdom. It's the easy way of living (Mt. 11:28-30) #5 @ 1:00:00

The good news that we can live now in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. I have confidence in Him for everything. I want to be as close to him as possible and learn from Him everything I can. I do believe that all of His commandments are for my benefit. Anything He tells me to do will be for my good. I will be much better off when I do it. You can only understand that if you get the background of the Kingdom. #6 @ 16:55

Why don't we hear the gospel of the kingdom? (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 59)
"I can not remember hearing a sermon on the Kingdom of God. Where has the kingdom been?" Peter Wagner #6 @ 19:25

How do we act with the power in the Kingdom? Prayer and Giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life. We ought always to be undertaking things we can not do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. Counting on God to do big things. #6 @ 25:00 +/-

Walk through the book of Acts and watch how the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus come together. You will see them separate at the beginning and together at the end. Acts put a face to the Kingdom and a Kingdom to the face.

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People did not know what Jesus was talking about when He talked about the Kingdom of God. #6 @ 28:00 +/-

When you invoke the name of Jesus, you can invoke the action of the Kingdom. Col 3:17 - The name of Jesus ties into Kingdom. #6 @ 32:00 +/-

At the end of Acts when Jesus & the Kingdom come together, the face of Jesus has been put on the Kingdom and the Kingdom is presented in terms of the King Jesus. A King always brings a kingdom so they come together. #6 @ 33:00

If Jesus is equal with God and now we have a person that we relate differently. We come to seek the Kingdom in Jesus and live in uncompromising obedience. #6 @ 39:00

Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of Human ranking. God has a different ranking. "First, last. Last, first." #6 @ 40:00 +/-

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in the kingdom of man. The Beatitudes are proclamation of the Kingdom not practices of the saved. The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus. That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus. You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. We have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God. #6 @ 1:06:50

When you track with the law, you begin to draw on the abundance of the Kingdom of God. That is how you seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Everything you need will be provided. If you don't track with it, you won't because you won't be tracking in the abundance of God's provision. #7 @ 40:00+

Transformation as the self as whole is what we look at when we are cultivating and growing the righteousness of the Kingdom. #7 at the End

"Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) That is why there is not boasting in this matter. It is by grace. Boasting disrupts everything in kingdom living. #8 @ 3:00

The gospel is the vision - "Living in the Kingdom of God". #8 @ 19:00

Out of these [spiritual disciplines] will come a richness of life in the kingdom that will allow you to do things Jesus said at a walk. All of the struggle and tension will

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move out of your life and you'll understand when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy. My burden is light." (Matthew 11) #8 @ 30:00 +/-

Being saved is not a matter of where you are going but who you are now. You are a participant in the life that Jesus is now living here. That's what salvation is. That all fits together once you start at the right place and keep Jesus at the right place. Keep Jesus central. You see him as King over a Kingdom in which He invites you to live with Him now. #8 @ the End

Gifting given with extraordinary power to accomplish the ends of the Church. Manifestation of the Kingdom power. The Kingdom comes into the Church. People in Leadership are exercising gifts from Christ beyond human ingenuity. #9 @ 7:00

If you are the light of the world, where you are is your appointment. You will be the light of the world by living out the Kingdom of God in that place. You bring the Kingdom in and let it work. You will be a person who will do the right thing because you are a person of love and faith and by faith you do the right thing and God will stand with you. #10 @ 33:00 +

We can't if we are living on our own resources and all we know is controlling things so that they come out the way we want them. If we abandon that, there will be cases where people will ask you for something who have no claim on you and you will give them based on need. Giving based just on need is a characteristic of people who have learned to live in the Kingdom of God. Will you make a law of it? I hope not. #11 @ 1:12:35

For the child of the kingdom, they will be many circumstances in which you will go contrary to these assumptions because you are alive in the kingdom. #11 pre 1:18:00

You can't catch the reality of the kingdom in a set of rules. #11 @ 1:19:00 +/-

There is not a single situation you have to deal with that is not affected by a shift into the Kingdom. #12 Intro

We have to make a decisions and the choice is who are we going to be - our kingdom people or God's kingdom people. #12 @ 7:45

If humans are the ones making our work go, they'll always be involved and we need them but they are not what we trust. We trust God and His kingdom. This frees us from the need to please human beings. "Fear of man brings a snare."

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(Proverbs). The person who lives in the kingdom of God does not depend on people. #12 @ 12:00+

Prayer is staying in action with the Kingdom of God. #12 @ 1:01:40

Giving & Prayer are the two baby steps in learning to act in the Kingdom. Opportunities for the youngest and smallest to make a contribution that God can act with. Acting with God is the secret of life in the Kingdom of God.
#12 @ 1:12:15

The total of what came in for the Kingdom of God with her 2 mites was greater than what came in with all the others. #12 @ 1:15:00

Prayer opens up the Kingdom and makes it possible for us to be present to others and to God in a way that creates a wonderful community of love and non condemnation and that's how we can live together under God in the Kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is talking about. #12 @ 1:19:00

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The Gospel

If you're preaching a gospel that does not mean redemption for your whole life, you haven't got the right one. #4 @ 10:43

~ ~ ~

Salvation

Salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on Earth. Of course it involves forgiveness & Heaven afterwards. It is not a question of omitting those, it is a question of making that the whole deal. #6 Intro

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The Divine Conspiracy Purpose

Divine Conspiracy is God's plan and process of overcoming evil with good in human history. #1 @ 15:45

The primary issue in the Divine Conspiracy is Truth - Is it truth or falsehood? #1 @ 29:55

God's intent for each of us that we become the kind of person whom He can empower to do whatever we want. The real issue - what kind of person am I? #1 @ 42:30

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The Divine Conspiracy is to overcome evil with good in the grinding process of human nature. #1 @ 58:00 (est.)

The Divine Conspiracy means to elicit love & obedience through the development of character so that out of human history comes a certain kind of community that then is going to have a role forever in the universe.
#2 @ 46:50

The Divine Conspiracy is God's aim to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's kingdom by bringing out a world and history wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ Himself.
#2 @ 1:18:00 +/- (end)

Out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want. #3 @ 26:00

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The Challenge for God's People

The greatest challenge facing the church today - do they have knowledge that is essential to human life or is it another wild faith project where you launch yourself into something and pretend you are being delivered? #1 @ 30:00+ (est.)

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead. #2 @ 1:07:00 (est.)

~ ~ ~

Human Nature

I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.
#2 @ 1:05:00 + (est.)

~ ~ ~

The Church

If it was assumed that the church had essential knowledge of life, without which human beings could live well or live at all, there would be no question of the separation of church and state. It's all predicated on the idea that religion had nothing to say about reality. #1 @ 30:00

The Church is not the Kingdom of God but a peculiar manifestation of the Kingdom of God. #1 @ End

The Church Today - Should it matter?

Q - Why does the New Testament say nothing upon those matters of which the church today spends most of its time?

A - It might be because nearly everything we devote our attention to today doesn't matter. Something else matters. Not the things we spend most of our time thinking about. #9 @ 26:30

How are people going to gather? We have to think in a different way.

Our choice: Natural ways people will be together - or - have them meet in one place. Demographics make it impossible to gather together in today's urban communities. 3-5% reached if you filled all the churches/synagogues once a week. The church has to be located in a different way. People will still meet. We have to think in a different way about what we do as we carry out the mission.

#9 @ 29:45

The primary field of evangelism today is the American Church. The gospel of discipleship and kingdom living needs to be taught in the large array of non-discipleship Christianity. They need to be evangelized. They need to hear the gospel. If we do that, discipleship will naturally emerge. People are not disciples because they have refused it. By and large they have not been invited. An intelligent invitation to be a disciple of Jesus. #9 @ 45:00+ (est.)

It's a real struggle because you are essentially trying to change the understanding that the people have who come and who support financially and by their presence and by their efforts. Tough to negotiate and get through. Recognize the problems but not be detoured from the goal. The goal [of the church] - Leading ourselves and leading others to change to the point that they become people who routinely do the things Jesus said do, not as the exception but as the rule of their life.

#10 @ 5:00

Not Trusting People & Performing for Human Credit (Mt. 6:1-18) is one of the biggest problems in our churches. Often done for good ends. We want people coming back because they enjoy it. The object of the service is not to have people

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to enjoy it. The object of the service to bring them closer to Christ and more fulfilled in the kind of life that is in Christ. To honor God, to worship God. Very often the mode of being that church services have is theater - a performance. That becomes very grinding for the people who have to do it. One of the things we have to do is to reject the idea that we are performing. #12 @ 8:00

Immerse Disciples in the Trinity - Church Services are a primary problem in this whole project. #5 @ 38:10

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Church Growth

Jesus' Plan for Church Growth - If we preach the unsearchable riches of Christ rightly, we are ready to move into that plan. If we do not, we can never go there and we will have to do something else. That is the history of the church, very largely doing something else. You go down through the ages and watch the ebb and the flow and you come up to the present and say, "What are we doing today?"

Go to the scriptures to see what is positively taught about life and reality and put it to the test. That gets us back to "Ground Zero planning". Now we're going to do something following Jesus Christ as if there was no one already there that had to be justified for what they are doing. If you'll do your ground zero planning, it will do the best thing you can for the people who (Christians) are already in the game. Many are good people, sincere people who want to follow Christ. But they are hindered by taking care of a lot of stuff that is irrelevant. One of beauties of the Great Commission is that it strips all of that away. #4 @ the end

Church growth is not more Christians but bigger Christians. #9 @ 12:00 (est.)

Church Growth - Numbers are not to be despised but the truth is you get more numbers when you have this kind of growth than if you don't. The natural process for the spread of the gospel and bringing of people into the body of Christ is one on one contact with individuals who have in them something so strong and so powerful that other people by and large will naturally want it. The ordinary person will, when they see this, this realization of Christ in individuals, they will come. You won't have enough room to hold them. #9 @ 14:10

You're not going to do it by a slick plan for church growth. You are not going to do in an any other way but by your own transformation and that spreading out to other people. That's the only way it works. #10 @ 29:00

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Preaching

Does the gospel I preach make disciples of Jesus or more consumers of religious goods? We have a spectator, nonparticipant, consumer version of Christianity. Not rooted in the body of Christ, personal transformation. Not rooted in the power of G that you can bring to bear and stand as His person and expect the Kingdom of God to make a difference you can never do on your own. #4 @ 1:50:00 (est.)

The Gospel Heard Does not produce Disciples - The central problem is the message preached or at least the one that is heard. The one heard does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples. #5 @ 1:00:40

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Discipleship & Disciplines

Discipleship Confused with Church Involvement - These don't come to transformation into Christlikeness to be what it's supposed to be and do what the church is supposed to do = people progressing to the place where they routinely & easily do what Christ taught us. #5 @ 21:50

[Churches] have to organize program of spiritual growth around the disciplines. You can not get growth in Christlikeness out of church as usual. There just isn't enough there. A couple of hours in church, some giving, isn't enough. You have to plan for more. Many churches are making available more intensive experiences. [Session 8 @ 33:18]

What does this {disciplines} have to do with being saved? Situation in our churches - Discipleship is one thing and being Christian is another. #8 @ 35:40

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The Ministry

Mark 4:26-29 - "All by itself" principle

I do not have to make it happen. Get out of the way. The more I tried to make it happen, the less it would work.

Speak the Word. Live in the Kingdom. Let the results take care of itself. Get out of God's way. Let the kingdom work. Count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom of God. Stop trying to get people to do anything. Get out of the business of making things happen.

My effort is putting the sickle in. Looking for people who need help in a transition. I plant the seed and watch it grow. I water and watch. Have confidence in the power in the Word of the Kingdom. There is a Kingdom of God. We can seek and find it through Jesus Christ. I will speak about Jesus - the Unspeakable riches of Christ. Introduce the Kingdom of God so they will understand the Kingdom and be prepared to enter it. #3 @ Intro

Pastors and leaders have the primary responsibility of enabling people to be together in way that they will flourish and grow in Christlikeness. They will develop spiritual competence. They will be able to do things we associate with being a Christian - be able & competent in things like speaking the Gospel, helping people who need help, praying, enduring suffering joyously. That's what we're aiming at. [Session 9 @ 4:00]

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