



THE GREAT I AM

His Birth & Life | Death & Resurrection

Dr. Rob Godard

DEDICATION

Pastor Thomas Calamunce has been a faithful servant at Cloverdale Baptist Church for 10 years (December 2018). I am thankful for many who have served by my side faithfully for the glory of God, and the good of His church, and Pastor Thomas is the longest serving full time soldier in my *band of brothers*. Thomas, thank you for serving Jesus and His church faithfully, with integrity, and with a heart to glorify God and obey His Word with all your might. You are a faithful brother, and as I have often said to my children, I not only appreciate what you do, but even more, who you are.

If my boys (who have been in your ministry sphere of impact) grow up to be like you in your heart for God and passion to serve Him, I will be proud of who they have become. May our God bless you, your family and your ministry as you continue to seek to conform those in your ministry to the image of Jesus (Galatians 4:19; 1 Corinthians 11:1). You have experienced a lot, battled hard, and I pray our partnership in the gospel has many more fruitful years to come

It is a joy to serve with you, and *happy* 10 year anniversary serving God's people with me at Cloverdale Baptist Church.

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There are a few men who have changed my life through deepening my view of Jesus and desire to follow Him.

I am thankful for John MacArthur and his call to know Jesus as LORD, especially in his book *The Gospel According to Jesus*. This helped me understand that to know Jesus as Savior is to follow Him as LORD.

I am thankful for Jerry Bridges (all his books) and his book *The Practice of Godliness*, that helped me understand how to practically pursue a life in the Spirit. He has helped me personally through our conversations and practically through his writing, I am grateful for his sermons, especially one on 2 Corinthians 5:21 which he preached at CBC and another on Isaiah 40 about the greatness of God. Jerry has helped me to follow my LORD, and for that I am very grateful to God for him.

I am thankful for John Piper. He was a little harder for me to understand, but hearing him preach at a conference many years ago shaped my view of the *greatness of God* more than any other man. God's Spirit used this series and subsequently many others to help me see that the God of the Bible does everything for His glory. I love his focus on, "the chief end of man is to glorify God, by enjoying Him forever", and I believe that his focus changed mine more than any other human being.

I am thankful for D.A. Carson. I chose to go to TEDS to study under him, and am convinced that if you disagree with him it means you should figure out where you are wrong. I praise God for his evangelical leadership in forming TGC, for his preaching and writing, and especially for his book on the prayers of Paul, entitled *Spiritual Reformation*.

A.W. Tozer is perhaps the man quoted most from our pulpit, and his great statement, "*what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us*" A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God, Their Meaning in the Christian Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 9.

Jesus has told us who He is richly in 7 great *I Am* statements, and this is our opportunity to ensure that our view of God—the most important thing about us—is measured by how God has revealed Himself to us in His inerrant, inspired, sufficient word.

Thank you to my precious family, Lori, Ryan, Jeff, Ben and Graeme. I love you all and praise God that you are in my life.

I can't wait for our journey to begin!

GROWTH GROUPS

There are three reasons that we prioritize the creation of these study books at Cloverdale Baptist Church:

1. We want to prioritize the hearing and applying of God's Word.

This is essential for the authentication of who God's people are (Matthew 7:21–28); and our growth into being who God wants us to be (Psalm 138:2; James 1:22–25). It is our prayer and desire that this book helps you to focus on what God's Word is saying, and that it helps to lead you into applying His Word to everyday life.

2. We value small group ministry.

It is our belief that small group ministry can produce passion in God's people (Hebrews 10:25), and serves as a protection for God's people (Hebrews 3:12–14). Sin can be deceitful, and hardened hearts can lead to despair. Small group ministry protects us from sin, and engages our hearts for devotion. We would love for all of our people to be engaged in small group ministry and in that growing to love one another, and God, more and more.

3. We are looking for long term change.

It is our hope as we interact with God's Word together that these books will help you remember what you are learning and longing to apply. It is our desire that they become for you a tool to look back at, and grow with in the coming years as you continue to grow in conformity to the image of our Lord Jesus (Galatians 4:19). We believe that God's Word is powerful and will not return void (Isaiah 55:11), and it is helpful for His people to have reminders of where He has equipped them for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

If you are not in a small group we encourage you to join one, and until you do, use the questions part of this notebook for reflection and to interact with your family and/or friends in a way that is actively seeking to apply the Bible to your lives (Deuteronomy 6:1–9).

May our God use this book through the power of His Spirit to bring change in His people for His glory.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Why do we exist as a church? Our mission statement declares, “*Cloverdale Baptist Church exists solely to bring glory to God. As a church we will hold steadfastly to the Word of God, faithfully proclaim Biblical Truth, love and build up believers, and joyfully share the gospel with our community and world.*”

This series is one that will help us to accomplish our mission.

To bring glory to God we must know who He is. Knowing who He is comes from studying who He has revealed Himself to be. To bring glory to God is to live in such a way that all we say and do declares the wonder of who He is. We have to know Him to glorify Him, which means that the power of the I AM statements of Jesus will help us to glorify God! To hold steadfastly to the Word of God and faithfully proclaim Biblical truth means we will rejoice in the revelation of God, and share it with one another and the world. This series will continue our passion to be loyal to God’s Word and to proclaim it faithfully.

Our goal to love and build one another up refers to a passion we have for community and conformity. Community—that we would be a people known for our love for one another (John 13:34–35); conformity—that we would be like Jesus (Galatians 4:19). Our goal in making disciples (Matthew 28:18–20) is to see people know and love Jesus as an overflow of a life lived for God and His glory.

To love each other the way He wants is always an overflow of experiencing His love (Ephesians 5:1–2; 1 John 4:19). The better we experience the gospel the more profoundly we will live it out (2 Corinthians 5:14) in self sacrificial love of one another.

The Bible tells us that one of the ways we grow in conformity to Him is by seeing Him as He is (2 Corinthians 3:18), and sharing that with others. Knowing Him is eternal life (John 17:3), and the better we know Him, the more we will be able to follow Him and live like Him.

Sharing the gospel with our community and world is especially important at this time of year. We want to build a culture of evangelism where each of us loves God so much that we long to share Him with others. To share the gospel in a way that is loyal to its content (Galatians 1:8–10) we must be those who know the One it is about, and that is our Lord Jesus!

The I Am statements are important for a number of reasons, and the three key ones that float to the top for us are:

1. They show us Jesus claiming equality with God: Exodus 3:14. Jesus is the great I Am. In using this phrase, He is claiming to be God. Those who heard Him claim this in the first century understood it well (John 8:58 – 59) and so will those today who understand the reality of who He is!

2. They show us who Jesus is claiming to be. The better we know Him the better our lives will reflect who He is, or stated another way, the more effective we will be at bringing Him glory.

3. We long to know Him and make Him known. The only possible way of doing this accurately is to see Him for who He has revealed Himself to be.

John wrote his gospel to help people believe in Jesus (John 20:30–31). The I Am declaration is used 23 times, and in 7 of those He ties it to descriptors. Understanding this descriptors will help us to know Him in a deeper more profound way!

May our God use this series to help us know Him and make Him known!

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEASON

Our world is becoming less and less aware of what it means to be a Christian. This is coming from the secularization of society and the loss of the distinctiveness of Christians. Many have never heard of Jesus, and those who have often see church and Christians in a negative light.

It is becoming increasingly important that we live our lives for Jesus in a way that displays His holiness and His love (1 Peter 1:8;2:11–12). We long to conform to the image of Jesus and be transformed by Him in such a way that every person in our congregation understands the importance of being an ambassador for Him (2 Corinthians 5:11–21), of being in the world, but not of the world so that, together, we can show the world what Jesus looks like, and how they can find freedom and forgiveness in Him.

The two seasons in the year when people still think about Jesus in our culture (perhaps this is growing less and less, but it is still here) are Christmas and Easter. One of the ways we want you to take advantage of this is to become more aware of your role in our becoming who we want to be as a culture of evangelism (each one reach one). By equipping you with gospel conversation tidbits we can more effectively seek to do our role.

We want our church to so conform us to the image of Jesus that we overflow our love for Him in the world. One of the ways we mark maturity (conformity) is in our desire to share about Jesus and His gospel. This is an area we are constantly seeking to deepen in God's people at Cloverdale, as we long to be like Jesus and reach into the communities where He has placed us.

Our prayer is that this Christmas and Easter seasons you would grow closer to Jesus, and as a consequence of that, would find yourself in many gospel conversations with non-church people for the glory of our King.

Pray for opportunities, and specific people, and in God's sovereign plan, be used as you walk in the good works He has prepared in advance for you to do (Ephesians 2:10) and live as one who has been given the ministry of reconciliation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

As you use this booklet to further your growth, prayer is key! Please make sure that you pray before you meet, and ask God to open your eyes. Also pray after for the many requests we have as a congregation.

We believe that prayer is essential to being fully devoted followers of Jesus, and that your prayers are key to our success in being excellent God's way for God's glory. We long for each of our people to be committed to prayer. It is our desire to be found displaying our experience of dependence by depending on Him who is worthy of our trust.

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." 2 Chronicles 16:9a

We long to be a blameless people, who pray continually because we know and love Him, and more importantly know He knows and cares for us!

Psalm 127:1; Exodus 17:10–12; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 6:18; Acts 6:4; Matthew 6:3–15

Four requests that help me stay focused as I pray for our church family

L — Love relationship with God...Core of who we are / MARK 12:28–31

That we would be a church that is relational, and has an experience of God's love; that this relationship would drive and define everything else; that we would love God first, and that this love would overflow into all other relationships!

O — One heart & mind / ROMANS 15:5–6 / PHILIPPIANS 1:27

That Cloverdale Baptist Church would display the love we have for God by our love for one another and unity in our pursuit of God's glory; that we would be a church that prefers one another (Romans 12:10), and that this preference in humility would yield Biblical unity!

V — Vision: That we would know God's preferred future for our church and pursue it!

- Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20
- 1 Peter 1:16
- John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- Matthew 28:16–20
- Ephesians 3:14–21; 1 Peter 4:8

HTML: Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love.

E — Eager servants / EPHESIANS 4:11–16 / JOHN 13:1–14

That we would be a great church fueled by Spirit-filled eager servants.

Pray for God to bless us with numbers (a church full of people who are full of God) and commitment to Him as we move towards completion of our building project.

We undertook believing it was God's will, and battled spiritually to get it moving. Let's keep up the battle for building and mission! Spend time praising God and thanking Him for His work to this point, and pleading with Him to shape our lives and the lives of those around us we love! God will use our prayers to shape our pursuit of Him successfully together.

Hebrews 4:16 *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Another helpful pattern:

CAST all your cares on Him for He cares for you.

- **Confession:** Ask God to search you, and bring before Him any known sin, agreeing with Him about that sin and turning your back on it. Be sure to accept His forgiveness. Alone / 1 JOHN 1:9
- **Adoration:** Focus on the attributes of God, praising Him for who He is. Brainstorm together on who God is, and then spend time praising Him for these attributes / PSALM 96:4
- **Supplication:** Your requests / PHILIPPIANS 4:4–6
- **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift / 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17–18

You will find these helpful patterns in the prayer time of each section, with our hope that you will use them to guide and guard your personal and corporate prayers.

Please use them only as patterns, and let your heart overflow with any and all concerns you may have!

Sermon 1

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35–51

Can you think of the time that you experienced your greatest satisfaction? Maybe a great turkey meal, or accomplishing a great educational goal. Maybe seeing your sports team win, or even winning yourself.

There are many things that satisfy us, however, only one Person can truly satisfy. We live in a world that is constantly going to sinful things to satisfy, a church that goes to good, but not great things to quench. This claim of Jesus is powerful in that it displays for us that He is the only one who can truly satisfy us!

As you study this text with us, remember that Jesus is the only one who can offer eternal life, the only one who can declare, “*whoever believes in me will never hunger again...*”

*O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
³ Because your steadfast love is better than life
my lips will praise you.
⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.*

Psalm 63:1–4

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Introduction

Galatians 4:19

Philippians 1:21

John 17:3

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

1. The crowd’s cry / VERSES 22–24

Jeremiah 2:12–13

Psalms 16:1–2

2. The Master’s mandate / VERSES 29–40

3. The radical response / VERSES 53–59

- He has called you

- You have come to Him

Implications

- Know who Jesus is: the Bread of Life

- Know Jesus personally

- You have come to Him



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Bread of Life / John 6:35–51

Interact on Tozer's words, "what we think about God is the most important thing about us."

- Do you think this is true?

How can we make sure that our view of God aligns with how God has revealed Himself to us?

Reflect on:

- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Galatians 4:19
- Philippians 1:21
- John 17:3

How can our journey on the *Great I Am* passages help us to obey these passages?

Reflect on the seven statements and discuss what you think they mean now.

1. I am the bread of life 6:35, 48, 51
2. I am the light of the world . . . 8:12; 9:5
3. I am the door of the sheep 10:7, 9
4. I am the good shepherd 10:11, 14
5. I am the resurrection and the life . 11:25
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life 14:6
7. I am the true vine 15:1

How does the context help us to understand what Jesus said when He said, I am the bread of life?

Jeremiah 2:12–13 talks about two sins that God's people have committed. Discuss this passage and how it helps us to be reminded that Jesus is the place to go for satisfaction?

What do you think David meant in Psalm 16:1–2: that He has no good thing apart from God?

What does Jesus point us with this great miracle?

What does it mean that Jesus has called us? VERSE 37, 44

How can we understand this in a way that acknowledges our responsibility to choose? VERSES 35, 47

Interact on Pastor Rob's Implications:

How does this help you to know Jesus better?

What steps do you need to take in your life to respond to Jesus as the *Bread of Life*?



NOTES



PRAYER

- L** | **Love relationship with God**
- O** | **One heart & mind:** unity
- V** | **Vision:** God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** | **Eager servants:** that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your prayer time together, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of an all defining first love relationship with Jesus.

The focus today will be on L. That we would be a first love devoted people.
As you pray, meditate on:

Matthew 22:36–40

Revelation 2:4–5

- Pray that we would love Jesus first and most, and that this would drive and define everything else about us.
- Pray that we would be a gospel-centred people, who don't lose sight of His love (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- Pray that we would experience His love and be changed (Ephesians 3:14–21)
- Pray that we would overflow this love in love for one another (Ephesians 5:1–2)
- Pray that we would be known as a church that loves God, and because of that, loves one another (John 13:34–35; 1 Peter 4:8).

Other prayer requests:

- Pray for one person you can have a **gospel conversation** with this Christmas.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

*Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord,
¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

Jeremiah 2:12–13

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

JOHN 6:35

Sermon 2

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:1–12

Jesus is the light of the world! This means there is no light other than Him. He is the only hope to escape darkness. As John Piper states, “...it is *Jesus or darkness*. There is no third alternative.”

So what does this mean? This means that everyone needs Jesus, to see, to understand and to escape darkness. Jesus helps us to see life as it actually is. When the light shines sin becomes apparent for how awful it is and either drives us to Jesus or devastation. The light of the world shines brightly on all in His presence.

This light when seen changes everything else. May this light shine on us so we see the magnificence of His Glory, and *follow Him*.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

¹⁰⁶ *I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to keep your righteous rules.*

¹⁰⁷ *I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your word!*

¹⁰⁸ *Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your rules.*

¹⁰⁹ *I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.*

¹¹⁰ *The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.*

¹¹¹ *Your testimonies are my heritage forever,
for they are the joy of my heart.*

¹¹² *I incline my heart to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.*

Psalm 119:105–112

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Introduction

1. What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world?

John 14:14

John 16:6-13

2. What difference does this make in my life?

- Follow Him

- Walk in the light

- Have the Light of Life

Psalm 119:105

Implications

- Know who Jesus is

- Know Jesus personally

- Experience: forgiveness; freedom; following



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Light of the World / John 8:1–12

Read John 8:1–12

What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world?

How does Jesus tying this to I AM, help us to see more deeply who He is?

Meditate on John 1:6–14, how do these verses help us to see what this means for us?

How does Jesus give light to everyone?

How do these verses in John 1 show us the need to believe, and the sovereignty of God in the same text?

- How can you understand these two things together?

Discuss Jesus being “*the source of all truth*”. What does this mean? Why does this matter?

How does Jesus being the light of the world motivate us to be light in the world?

How does knowing Jesus as the light of the world help us to follow Him?

How does knowing Jesus as the light of the world help us to walk in the light?

How does knowing Jesus as the light of the world help us to have the light of life?

Why is this understanding of Jesus key to growing as His disciples?

How can you grow in being more effective as a little light in the world?



NOTES



PRAYER

- L** | **Love relationship with God**
- O** | **One heart & mind:** unity
- V** | **Vision:** God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** | **Eager servants:** that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on O. That we would have one heart and mind: Unity
As you pray, meditate on:

Philippians 2:1–11

Romans 15:5–6

Romans 12:10

God hates division (Proverbs 6:16–19; Titus 3:10), and so it is one of the key areas that the demonic realm will attack in our church, and in our own hearts if we are walking in the flesh.

Confess any divisive attitudes or actions you have had, and pray that your heart would choose the unity that God wants us to have!

Other prayer requests:

- Pray for the person you want to share the gospel with, and if you have, share specific requests in the context of that.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

| *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

2 Corinthians 4:6

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,
"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life."

JOHN 8:12

Sermon 3

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1–18

Jesus declares that He is the good shepherd, meaning He stands unique as the one who leads and cares for His sheep. Good is a word that means noble, wholesome, or beautiful, and it displays Jesus as beautiful inside and out. He is inherently good! We know this, but in the context of the declaration of who He is this is very precious. He is the one who *protects, guides and nurtures His flock*.

If we know Him as our good Shepherd then the reality of lives that are unstable and utterly defenseless become safe and under our Shepherd's watchful eye, filled with peace. The good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. He can always be trusted, as He is all powerful and tender towards His own. We will hear His voice and obey Him in rest and joy as we live our lives in the shadow of our Shepherd.

My longing for us as we study this text is that we would together experience the richness of His power and protection, even as we share in His life and love.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23:1–6

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Introduction

The Good Shepherd:

1. Loves sacrificially

2. Loves protectively

Philippians 3:7-11

3. Loves with hope

1 Peter 5:4

Implications

Psalm 23

- I shall not want

- I will not fear

- I shall dwell



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Good Shepherd / John 10:1-18

If you could be whatever animal you wanted to be, what animal would you choose and why?

Read John 10:1-18

Why do you think the Bible chooses the sheep to be our likeness?

John 10 is one of the most precious passages in the Bible, as you read through it, discuss why you think so many have found it precious?

How does this help us to know Jesus better?

How is the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ alone on display in this passage?

Why is the sacrificial love of Jesus our good shepherd so significant?

The comparison is to the thief, how do you see the demonic realm seeking to steal, kill, and destroy?

How does this picture of Jesus show us His tender care for us individually?

How should this make us feel in the midst of all that life brings us?

Why is it that we sometimes don't feel this?

How does this passage, and 1 Peter 5:4 help us to live our lives in joyful anticipation of Jesus' return?

Pastor Rob focused on Psalm 23 and sought to help us understand this great Psalm in the context of John 10...

Read and reflect on Psalm 23...if the Lord is your Shepherd, what does it mean for you personally that you will:

- Not want
- Not fear
- Dwell

How can we use Psalm 23 as a precious reminder of God's care no matter what we are going through



NOTES



PRAYER

- L** | **Love relationship with God**
- O** | **One heart & mind:** unity
- V** | **Vision:** God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** | **Eager servants:** that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **V**. That we would know and pursue God's preferred vision for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- Pray that we would have an ever-deepening all-defining, never-forgotten relationship with Jesus!

As you pray, meditate on:

Matthew 22:36–40

Revelation 2:4–5

- Pray that we would love Jesus first and most, and that this would drive and define everything else about us.
- Pray that we would be a gospel-centred people, who don't lose sight of His love (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- Pray that we would experience His love so we are changed (Ephesians 3:14–21)
- Pray that we would overflow this love so that we love one another (Ephesians 5:1–2)
- Pray that we would be known as a church that loves God, and because of that, loves one another (John 13:34–35; 1 Peter 4:8).
- Pray for the person you want to share the gospel with, and if you have, share specific requests in the context of that.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

¹² *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?*

Isaiah 40:11–12



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

JOHN 10:10–11

Sermon 4

I AM THE DOOR

John 10:1–10

We live in a world that wants to “*live and let live*”. Any notion of exclusivity, especially in religion, is difficult for the modern Canadian mind to understand, let alone believe. For the Christian who wants to know and obey God’s Word, this exclusivity is not only something we believe, it is also something we know to be good.

When Jesus said, *I Am the door*, notice it is exclusive, and offers hope, freedom and forgiveness to all who would enter in. He is the only way to salvation, and He is the one we can trust to protect us from any and all who would threaten to steal our abundant life in Him.

May we believe the gospel, repent of our sin, and rest in the full assurance that our Lord and Savior has paid the price in full, and is *almighty* so nothing and no one can threaten His protection and tender care.

1 Peter 5:4 “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.*

*² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,*

*³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.*

Psalm 46:1–3

I AM THE DOOR

Introduction

1. The Door from / VERSE 9

Luke 19:10

1 Timothy 1:15

2. The Door to

3. The only Door

Implications

- Enter through the Door
- Experience security because of the Door
- Enjoy freedom from the other side the Door



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Door / John 10:1-10

Why do you think Jesus chose this metaphor?

How is it significant that we enter through a door from something, to something?

Pastor Rob told a story of the shepherds in ancient time actually being the door at the entrance that protected the sheep, as well as kept the sheep in their tender care. Thinking that Jesus probably was referring to this, that He stands at the door protecting us from the outside and caring for us on the in, how does this help you feel peace?

What does the metaphor of Jesus being the door help us to understand what we are saved from?

What does the metaphor of Jesus being the door help us to understand what we are saved to?

Why is it important that we believe that Jesus is the **only door**?

How does this help us think about evangelism more faithfully?

If someone was to ask you how to get through Jesus, the **Door**, how would you respond?

Have someone in your group share their testimony of entering through the door.

What does it mean to experience security because of this great I Am statement?

Are you experiencing this security?

- If yes, how? If no, how can you take steps to get there?

What does it mean to experience “freedom on the other side of the door?”

How can you do this?

Who have you shared your faith with this month?



NOTES



PRAYER

- L** Love relationship with God
- O** One heart & mind: unity
- V** Vision: God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** Eager servants: that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on V. That we would know and pursue God's preferred vision for our church family.

This is always a deeper more vibrant relationship with Jesus. Pray that all we do would be an overflow of our relationship with Jesus.

HTML: Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love

Holiness: Pray that we as a church would be holy as God is holy!

1 Peter 1:16-17

- Take the time to **repent** of all known sin.
- Take the time to choose obedience in every area of your life.
- Meditate and pray for our church: Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 6:9.
- Pray that you would personally be holy, not legalistic, and that it would show that you are set apart for Him.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

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

1 Peter 1:3-5

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

JOHN 10:9

Sermon 5

THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

1 Thessalonians 3:6–13

Cloverdale Baptist Church longs to be a family that moves forward on her knees. What we mean by this is that we believe that God has chosen to use our prayers to bring about positive change. Therefore we see one of the main responsibilities that we have as a church is to build a culture of prayer.

One of the great lessons that D.A. Carson taught me is that praying the prayers of Scripture is praying in line with the Spirit. Our goal is to learn not only what the Scriptures teach in terms of the necessity of prayer, but also to learn how to pray.

May God use this study to teach us about prayer, to train us to pray, and to transform our world through those prayers.

*Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.*

² *Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.*

³ *Be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all the day.*

⁴ *Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*

⁵ *For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.*

Psalm 86:1–5

THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

Introduction

Exodus 17:8–16

2 Chronicles 16:9

Psalms 127:1

1. Foundations for a prayer-filled church / VERSES 7–10

1 Thessalonians 3:6–13

Ephesians 1:11

- Authentic relationship with God and His people

Daniel 9:1–3

- Because I love the church

Matthew 22:34–40

1 Peter 4:8

2. Following the Spirit as a prayer-filled church / VERSES 6–13

- Faith

- Love

John 13:34–35

1 John 4:19

1 John 3:16

Ephesians 3:14–21

- Holiness

Implications

- Know the importance of prayer

- Get the foundations right

- Follow the pattern



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

The Priority of Prayer / 1 Thessalonians 3:6–13

Read Exodus 17:8–16

- Why is this story in the Bible?

How important do you think prayer is for our church?

How important do you think prayer is for your own spiritual life?

How is what we (you) are doing reflect the value that we say we place on prayer?

Why do you think Jesus had a parable for the purpose of getting His disciples to “*always pray and never give up*”? LUKE 18:1

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6–13

How does knowing how Paul prayed, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, help us to learn to pray?

How does answered prayer motivate us to pray more?

- Discuss prayers that God has answered for you

How does knowing God’s sovereignty help us to pray more effectively?

Why does praying improve when we love the local church?

What does it mean to love the local church?

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit?

What does prayer look like when it is in line with what the Spirit has revealed prayer should look like?

How often do you pray for others increasing in faith, love and holiness?

What steps can you take in your life to pray more:

- As an individual
- As a community
- As a church
- As a person who wants your prayers to be more biblical



NOTES



PRAYER

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- V** | **Vision:** God's preferred future would be known by our leadership team & pursued by our people.
- E** | **Eager servants:** that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on V. That we would know and pursue God's preferred vision for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- Pray that we would be **holy**. (Holiness, Truth, Mission, Love).

Focus today is on **Truth**...Pray that we would be loyal to God's Word, and practice it (John 17:17).

- Pray for Pastor Rob as he prepares and delivers sermons.
- Pray for other ministry people as we seek to be loyal to God's Truth.
- Pray that we would be filled with the Holy Spirit and live our lives in loyalty to God.
- If you have time pray through 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 together.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

*The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.*

²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

³¹ but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:28-31

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

LUKE 18:1

Sermon 6

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

Luke 12:35–48

Jesus is coming again! If you grew up in the seventies, you will have heard about the return of Jesus a lot. Many watched movies like “*A Thief in the Night*” and were impacted by the reality that Jesus might return soon.

We believe that Jesus’ return is imminent. At least that is what our statement of faith says. Too often we live like we are not sure that He will return, and instead we live like everyone else.

It is my hope that this text causes God’s people at CBC to move forward in relationship with Jesus in such a way that all of our lives are impacted by the return of Jesus that could happen *today*!

Maranatha, even so Lord Jesus come!

*May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works,
³² who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke!
³³ I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.
³⁵ Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!*

Psalm 104:31–35

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

Introduction

The return of Jesus is imminent: change your life!

1. Be awake

- We need to be alive

- We need to be alert

2. Be treasure-seekers

Matthew 13:44–46

Hebrews 11:24–28

3. Be a faithful steward

Luke 17:7–10

4. Be one who perseveres

1 Corinthians 15:58

Luke 12:43

Love God



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

Jesus is Coming Again / Luke 12:35–48

Why do you think so few people are anticipating the return of Jesus?

When was the last time you meditated on His return?

How do you think you would live your life differently if you believed with certain conviction that Jesus could return today?

What does it mean to “*be awake*”?

How can we live this way all of the time?

Why is our own personal authentic conversion essential in this?

What is *alertness* spiritually?

How can you be alert? 1 Peter 1:13

What does it mean to be a treasure seeker?

How does Matthew 6:19–21 help us grasp how to live this out?

What can we learn from the life of Moses in light of seeking to walk by faith and not by sight? HEBREWS 11:24–26

How will this impact how we invest our time, treasures and talents?

What does it mean to persevere?

Why do you think this command is so important to us in Canada?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

What steps can you take to make sure you persevere in your life?

Why does Pastor Rob end with talking about the *one key thing* being *loving God*?



NOTES



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The focus today will be on V. That we would know and pursue God's preferred vision for our church family.

This is always as an overflow of relationship with Jesus, so this vision is relational before it is vision caring. We want our preferred future to come from God, and to be focused on loving Him and carrying out His mission!

- Pray that we would be *holy, truth-loyal*.
- Pray that we would be missional. We want to be a place where *each one reaches one*.
- Pray that the LORD of the harvest would send out people to the harvest (Matthew 9:38).
- Pray that we would represent Him well (2 Corinthians 5:11–21).
- Pray that new believers would be discipled effectively (Matthew 28:16–20).
- Pray for non-church: Family, friends, neighbours, work relationships.
- Pray for an *open door, open hearts and open mouth*.

Other:

- Pray that we would have *first love* devotion to God!

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Titus 2:12–14

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

So that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 1:10

Sermon 7

NO RESERVE, NO RETREATS, NO REGRETS

Matthew 25:14–30

How we view God and life shapes how we live our lives.

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.

We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God.

— A.W. TOZER, *THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY* (NEW YORK: HARPERCOLLINS, 1978), 1.

How you see God will shape how you see yourself. We are His servants, we are bought with a price and all that we are and all that we have is His. He is a gracious Master, however if we do not see Him as He is in this, we will see ourselves as givers of what is ours, rather than stewards of what is His!

My hope is that God will help us to understand how important it is to see life correctly and invest wisely; for we have a choice, Tut or Borden, and I long to choose Borden's pattern!

*You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalm 104:31–35

NO RESERVE, NO RETREATS, NO REGRETS

Introduction

A steward, as defined by Randy Alcorn, is “someone entrusted with another’s wealth or property and charged with the responsibility of managing it in the owner’s best interest.”

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” **1 Corinthians 6:19–20**

Reality #1

Master-servant relationship / VERSE 14

John 1:12

“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

Luke 17:7–10

Reality #2

God is the owner / VERSE 15

D.A. Carson states correctly, “Attempts to identify the talents with spiritual gifts, the law, natural endowments, the gospel or whatever else, lead to a narrowing of the parable with which Jesus would have been uncomfortable. Perhaps he chose the talent or mina symbolism because of its capacity for varied application.”

- “To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.” (Deut. 10:14)
- “The land is Mine and you are but aliens and My tenants.” (Lev. 25:23)

- “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things.” (1 Chron. 29:11–12)
- “Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.” (Job 41:11)
- “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” (Ps. 24:1–2)
- “For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.” (Ps. 50:10–12)
- “The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty.” (Hag. 2:8)

Reality #3

God cares how we invest what He has given us / VERSES 16–30

2 Corinthians 5:10

Matthew 6:19–21

Implications

- Thank God for who you are and what you have

Ephesians 2:10

- Totally commit all you are and all you have
- Today begin investing

“He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

No Reserve, No Retreats, No Regrets / Matthew 25:14–30

What is your greatest physical treasure?

A steward, as defined by Randy Alcorn is, “someone entrusted with another’s wealth or property and charged with the responsibility of managing it in the owner’s best interest”.

How does it help us to understand that we are all stewards of who we are, what we have, and what God has called us to do?

How does Borden and Tutt help you to reflect on your own use of what God has given you, and who God has made you?

Read Matthew 25:14–30

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

What does it mean that we are not our own?

Why is it important that we see God as our Master and ourselves as His servants?

- How does Luke 17:7–10 help us understand that God doesn’t owe us anything?

Do you think we struggle with this?

- Why or why not? How?

What does it mean that God owns us and everything we have?

How does this impact how you are living your life?

Why do you think God cares about how we invest what He has given us?

How does this investment into eternal things make sense in light of eternity and the temporary? MATTHEW 6:19–21

Interact with the implications in a way that seeks to apply them to your life:

- Thank God for who you are and what you have:

- Radically commit your life to Him:

- Begin investing:

What are some ways you can begin investing your:

- Time:

- Treasures:

- Talents:



NOTES



PRAYER

- L** Love relationship with God
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- E** **Eager servants:** that each of our people would be using their gifts to build the body of Jesus and help us find unity!

Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on V. That we would know and pursue God's preferred vision for our church family.

Holiness; truth-loyal; missional

Pray that we would be a church that is **loving** to one another, and known for our love.

John 13:34–35

1 Peter 4:8

- Pray that we would experience God's love so richly that it overflows (Ephesians 3:14–21).
- Pray that your heart would be so overwhelmed with God's love that Sunday mornings you come ready to love those God places in your path!
- Today, commit your life to God as an overflow of His grace (Romans 12:1–2).

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'?⁸ Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'?⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'

Luke 17:7–10

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

MATTHEW 6:19–20

Sermon 8

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

John 14:1–6

Know Jesus is more important than anything else in this world. There are many reasons why this is so essential, and one of the main ones is that He is exclusively, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Knowing Him this way gives us peace and rest, and also gives us a passion to reach people for Jesus, and to share with them who He is.

In this world we will have trouble, but we can take heart for Jesus has overcome the world. For anyone who lacks peace, or passion, knowing Jesus this way is essential! If you are not joyfully on mission for Jesus then you do not understand this passage. So our hope is that we will focus more on knowing who He has revealed Himself to be to us, and this will change our lives!

To know Him is to have eternal life (John 20:31). Our longing is to know Him more and more and to share who He is with all who will listen!

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!*

*² Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,*

*³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,*

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,

who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalm 103:1–5

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Introduction

1. The context: the cross

2. The comfort: the care

Romans 8:28–29

James 1:2–4

2 Corinthians 12:1–10

- Joseph:

3. The clarity: the call

Acts 4:12

Implications

- Believe in God, believe also in Jesus

- Don't let your hearts be troubled

- Call others to trust in Him

2 Corinthians 5:11–21

1 Peter 2:11–12



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life / John 14:1–6

Read John 14:1–6

Why should the hearts of the people who are following Jesus be troubled?

Why shouldn't they be troubled?

How does this text help us to be comforted?

Discuss what you think the rooms God is preparing for us are...

How do these give us hope?

Why is John 14:6 so controversial in our culture?

Here Jesus is very exclusive. Discuss, what these mean—the Way, the Truth, and the Life

How does Acts 4:12 help us to understand the exclusivity of Jesus?

How does this reality give you a heart to share the gospel with others?

What is a “*culture of evangelism*”?

How can you be one of the “*each one reach one*” people?

What does it mean to be an ambassador for Jesus?

2 Corinthians 5:11–21

This Easter season who are five people you can commit to pray for?

Pray for one another, and commit to engage in gospel conversations at least once a week over the next four weeks.

- Email your stories to a pastor!



NOTES



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Please pray for all of these in your time, but focus on our church's (and your group's, and your own) pursuit of unity in our church as we seek the mind of Christ.

The focus today will be on **E. Eager servants in God's church.**

- Pray that God's people at Cloverdale would see their value (Ephesians 2:10; 4:16); and choose to serve Him together with joy for the good of the family.
- Pray that you would know your spiritual gifts.
- Pray that you would choose to serve Him.
- Pray that you would enjoy the unity that comes from serving together!
- Pray that our leadership team would understand how best to equip, enable and unleash God's people in our midst.

List the five people you are praying for this Easter:

I am committed to engage in a gospel conversation at least once a week this Easter Season:

Signed: _____

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21



MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

JOHN 14:6

Sermon 9

I AM THE TRUE VINE /PT. 1

John 15:1–11

The Bible calls for us to be those who *make disciples* (Matthew 28:18–20). One of the essential attributes of a disciple is that they abide in Jesus, who is the *True Vine*.

This is a metaphor that symbolizes absolute dependence as well as an overflow of intimate relationship. If we learn to truly *abide* we will bear fruit and prove ourselves to be His disciples. Bearing fruit is absolutely essential to true discipleship, and the only way possible to do this is *abiding*. Christianity is relational from start to finish, and the joy we have as those who know Jesus is that He is at work in us and through us to change the world.

I am hoping over the next two weeks we will together learn how to *abide* in Jesus, and that the rest of our lives will be a growing process of learning to do this more and more effectively. He is the *True Vine*, and we are the *branches*—and as the Father prunes us, our potential for impact is overwhelmingly immense!

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

*² Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble*

*³ and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.*

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in;

⁵ hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

*⁶ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.*

⁷ He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

*⁸ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!*

⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

*⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things;
let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.*

Psalm 107:1–9, 43

I AM THE TRUE VINE / PT. 1

Introduction

Jesus said: *I Am the True Vine*

So we should **ABIDE**:

- **A:** Authentic in my faith

- **B:** Bible-saturated

- **I:** Impact (fruit producing)

- **D:** Delight in love

- **E:** Eager obedience



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the True Vine / Pt. 1 / John 15:1–11

Read John 15:1–11

Identify together these metaphors

- Vine
- Vinedresser
- Branches
- Fruit

Why do you think that Jesus identified as the *Vine*?

What is the significance of this being an Old Testament metaphor, and who did it represent?

As you look at verse 5, what does it make you realize about what you can do without Jesus?

Why is it important that we realize this, and live in light of it?

Walk through the acrostic on how to *abide*, and discuss how you can make sure that you are seeking to *abide*:

- Authentic in my faith
- Bible-saturated
- Impact
- Delight in love
- Eager obedience

This is the key to a vibrant Christian life. How can you hold one another accountable for this?

How are your gospel conversations going?

Pray for your list of five people



NOTES



PRAYER

It is important to us that we are more and more a praying church. Patterns help us to be sure that we are entering into the throne room with boldness and the appropriate reverence.

CAST

- **Confession:** Ask God to search you, and bring before Him any known sin, agreeing with Him about that sin, and turning your back on it. Be sure to accept His forgiveness. Alone / 1 JOHN 1:9
- **Adoration:** Focus on the attributes of God, praising Him for who He is. Brainstorm together on who God is, and then spend time praising Him for these attributes / PSALM 96:4
- **Supplication:** Requests you have / PHILIPPIANS 4:4–6
- **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift / 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17–18

Reflect on Ephesians 3:14–21 and pray it for one another and others who come to mind. Our level of intimacy with the Savior must be ever growing for us to be fruit-producing disciples!

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:5–7

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

JOHN 15:1

Sermon 10

I AM THE TRUE VINE /PT.2

John 15:1-17

We are spending another week in one of the most powerful passages in the entire Bible on what it means to follow Jesus. Take the time to reflect on the context, and how Christ can use these verses to conform you to His image.

This passage focuses not only on what it means to abide, but also on the fruit of abiding. Truly knowing the intimacy of being a branch in the vine will yield radical life change. This passage is worth our time to meditate on and delight in.

If you struggle being *joyful* all of the time...if you struggle with the amount of fruit you are producing, if you long for so much more, this passage is for you. We are a great church, and if we meditate, know, and apply John 15 to our lives, we will be an unstoppable force for fruit in this world. He is the vine: *abide* in Him, and you will always be fruitful.

¹ O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

*² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.*

*³ You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.*

*⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.*

*⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.*

*⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.*

Psalm 139:1-6

I AM THE TRUE VINE / PT. 2

Introduction

1. Jesus said: / *I Am the True Vine*

2. Full of joy / VERSE 11

3. Full of fruit / VERSES 7–8

What is fruit?

- Character like Christ / GALATIANS 5:22–23
- Evangelism
- Praise / HEBREWS 13:15

“Love for people and the conversion of sinners.”

4. Fully His friend / VERSES 13–14

5. Full of love / VERSE 17

John 13:34–35

1 Peter 4:8

1 Corinthians 13:1–8

John 15:12

Implications

- Be authentic
- Be honest
- Be abiding



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the True Vine / Pt. 2 / John 15:1–17

Read John 15:1–17

Why is this such a significant metaphor?

Discuss what you are seeking to apply from last week, in terms of A.B.I.D.E.ing

Why is joy such an essential part of our relationship with Jesus?

How do we make sure we are those who are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy? 1 PETER 1:8

How can we grow to rejoice in all circumstances? 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18

Interact on what spiritual fruit is:

- How are you displaying these things in your life?
- How can you grow in them according to John 15?
- Why is it important we display fruit, according to John 15:7–8?

What does it mean to be a friend of God?

How can you rejoice in this, and remain reverent?

Why is it significant that to be a true friend of God means to obey His commands?

Why does love come up so clearly in this text? VERSE 17

- Reflect on these passages and discuss how we can grow in displaying love as a church:
 - 1 Peter 4:8
 - John 13:34–35
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1–8

In the implications we were told to test ourselves:

- 2 Peter 1:10
- 2 Corinthians 13:5

How can we do this in a way that keeps our assurance strong in Christ?

Why is testing ourselves important?

Reflect as you close on who Jesus is, and how knowing Him can help us to be like Him.



NOTES



PRAYER

It is important to us that we are more and more a praying church. Patterns help us to be sure that we are entering into the throne room with boldness and the appropriate reverence.

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- **Supplication:** Requests you have / PHILIPPIANS 4:4–6
- **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift / 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17–18

Next week is **Easter Sunday**, make sure you have invited at least one of the five friends you have been praying for to come to church.

- Pray that God will give you wisdom and courage as you continue to seek to have gospel conversations.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you.

John 15:12–14

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

JOHN 15:7–8

Sermon 11

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:1–27

John 11 is a passage that glorifies Jesus by showing His power over life and death! Jesus waits when those He loves are going through pain, not only because He loved them, but also because He loves us. Jesus waits because He wanted to show us something greater than the power of death.

For all of us who have watched those we love go to the grave, this passage reaches into our lives with tender grace. God is an awesome God, and death can't separate us from His love! As we celebrate Resurrection Sunday, may we never forget the richness of what this means for our lives, and perhaps as important, our death.

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life!

Oh, I believe!

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

1 Corinthians 15:1–11

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Introduction

1. The glory of Jesus / VERSE 4

Isaiah 43:7

Romans 6:23

John 3:16

John 10:11

1 Corinthians 10:31

2. The grace of Jesus / VERSES 28–37

John 11:32

3. The great claim of Jesus: *I Am* / VERSES 25–27

Implications

- Proclaim
- Passion
- Peace
- Promise



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

I Am the Resurrection and the Life / John 11:1–27

Growing up, how did your family celebrate Resurrection Sunday?

Do you have any traditions now that help you enjoy this season?

How did you use this focus on Jesus to glorify Him?

Read John 11:1–27

Why is glorifying God so important in the Bible?

What does it mean to glorify God?

How can we obey 1 Corinthians 10:31?

In this story how does death glorify God?

Why do you think Jesus wept?

How does this help us to remember Jesus' tender care for us in every day issues?

- Interact with: *"Nothing you care about is too small to take to Jesus."*

What does Jesus' claim *"I Am the resurrection and the life"* mean?

How does this give us hope in our lives, as we seek to Honour Him?

What does it mean to believe this, as Jesus asked Martha?

How can you become more effective at:

- Proclaiming who Jesus is?
- Serving Him with passion?
- Experiencing peace even in the midst of those around you who are struggling?



NOTES



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- **Supplication:** Requests you have / PHILIPPIANS 4:4–6
- **Thanksgiving:** This can mainly focus on the cross, but should also include every good and perfect gift / 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17–18

Pray for the people you invited to our service on Sunday. Pray for more opportunities to show them Jesus' love and share the gospel with them with your life and lips.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

1 Corinthians 15:3–8

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

JOHN 11:25–26

Sermon 12

DON'T NEGLECT THE GOSPEL

Hebrews 2:1–4

Christmas and Easter help us to reflect and rejoice at the greatness of our salvation! It truly is transforming to meditate on our Master and all He has accomplished for His people. The gospel is a display of love that, when experienced, will truly change those who have experienced it. Our desire as God's people is to be those who don't just experience God's grace with words, but with *power*.

If we learn not only to believe, but also to bask in the gospel, our lives will be lived with joy on mission for God! One of the great lessons Christians in our generation need to learn is to *preach the gospel to ourselves* every day.

My prayer is that this text would teach us to be loyal to Jesus, and to experience His grace so richly that we are defined and driven by that. True Christianity is a relationship that drives and defines us. For this reality to take root, and deepen, we must be those who never forget the gospel, or stated positively, who passionately pursue an active memory of this good news.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
³ My tears have been my food day and night,
while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"
⁴ These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.
⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation*

Psalm 42:1–5

DON'T NEGLECT THE GOSPEL

Introduction

Don't neglect so great a salvation:

Why?

- Jesus is awesome / VERSES 1:2–4

- The Old Testament points to this / VERSE 2:1

- The New Testament points to this / VERSE 2:4

Implications

- Forgiven

- Focus

Hebrews 12:1–3

Colossians 2:4

Psalm 42:5–6

- The gospel is freeing: Romans 8:1
- The gospel is motivating: 2 Corinthians 5:14
- The gospel is transforming: Ephesians 5:1–2
- The gospel brings confidence: Romans 8:32
- The gospel empowers forgiveness: Matthew 18:21–35
- The gospel shapes our identity: Ephesians 2:8–10
- The gospel produces humility: Matthew 5:3
- The gospel engages perseverance: Romans 8:32

DON'T NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION



NOTES



GROWTH GROUP NOTES

Don't Neglect the Gospel / Hebrews 2:1-4

Why is it so important that we don't neglect so great a salvation?

How can we do this more effectively together?

"If the gospel was truly central to our lives, we would live with purity, passion and peace." Pastor Rob

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

- If you agree, how can you make the gospel more central in your life?

This passage talks about not neglecting, and we used the words *preach the gospel to yourself*. Talk about the ways that Pastor Rob mentioned that the gospel shapes as you understand them. Are there passages and concepts you would add?

- The gospel is freeing: Romans 8:1
- The gospel is motivating: 2 Corinthians 5:14
- The gospel is transforming: Ephesians 5:1-2
- The gospel brings confidence: Romans 8:32
- The gospel empowers forgiveness: Matthew 18:21-35
- The gospel shapes our identity: Ephesians 2:8-10
- The gospel produces humility: Matthew 5:3
- The gospel engages perseverance: Romans 8:32

Commit to be a group that helps one another *not neglect so great a salvation*, and to be an individual who *preaches the gospel to yourself every day*.

- Discuss practical ways you will do this.



NOTES



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-
- Pray for a deeper experience of the gospel in your life so that you are free and transformed, motivated and obedient to God's mandate.

Extra memory verses (for those wanting more):

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 2:1–4

MEMORIZE & MEDITATE

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard.

HEBREWS 2:3

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God.”

A. W. Tozer

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

What is the gospel? (<https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-gospel>)

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to reconcile sinners to God. Here’s the whole story:

1. The one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him (Gen. 1:26-28).
2. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23).
3. In his great love, God sent his Son Jesus to come as king and rescue his people from their enemies—most significantly their own sin (Ps. 2; Luke 1:67-79).
4. Jesus established his kingdom by acting as both a mediating priest and a priestly sacrifice—he lived a perfect life and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of many (Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Heb. 7:26; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-21); then he rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted his sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted (Acts 2:24, Rom. 4:25).
5. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness (Acts 17:30, John 1:12). If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God (John 3:16).

Now that’s good news.

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ, Response:

1. **God.** God is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 2:5-8).
2. **Man.** All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen. 1:26-28, Ps. 51:5, Rom. 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3).
3. **Christ.** Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God’s wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Cor. 15:20-22).
4. **Response.** God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:9-10).

*Some of this material has been adapted from *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever, p. 43*

APPENDIX

This book has been put together to help us to get to know Jesus in a deeper and more authentic manner as we celebrate Christmas and the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter time. It is important that we understand that these seasons are culturally important in our desire to be a church that has a passion to live out our faith in a way that impacts our community (culture of evangelism).

These two seasons present what I believe to be the best opportunities to invite people into our church to hear the story of Jesus in the Cloverdale context. So how can we use these opportunities?

1. Perceive / COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

There are two key things that will make this season an effective God glorifying time in our church.

Perception #1: We should be aware of the value of these seasons in terms of the conversations that we can have. In the current culture, many people discuss the origins of these seasons and even dabble in the Christianity of them.

Some people only come to church during Christmas or Easter, others do Google searches and try to understand what is going on in churches, or the *reason for the season*. We want to be aware that these opportunities are available for us to enter into the conversation. Always we want to be alert to what is going on around us, and to use every opportunity to shift the conversation to an opportunity to talk about Jesus and the gospel, but during these two seasons we want to be extra aware.

So, get your antenna up and your heart open to the opportunities of sharing about Jesus, be aware that this is the prime season for sharing our stories with others to help them see the greatness of *His story*.

Perception #2: You are God's plan for the people He has placed in your world, and you would be wise to choose times that are set up for you like Christmas and Easter. This is a great opportunity for you to do what you are saved to do, point people to Jesus and be like Him.

2. Pray / ROMANS 10:1

We want you to be committed to praying for three key things during these seasons:

2.1) People: For those God places on your heart in your sphere of influence. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be at work in them, and would give you opportunity to speak to them. Pray that they would hear the gospel and have soft hearts in their response. Pray that when they are invited to next step programs they would say yes.

2.2) Programs: For those leading our programs over this season, that we would be Spirit-filled in our planning and that we would accomplish exactly what we need to

accomplish. Pray for those sharing the gospel, that it would be clear, and presented in such a way that those who come can continue to share this with those they invited. Pray that we would accomplish what God wants in His power in our programming.

2.3) Pact: For our church, that we would grow more and more this *culture of evangelism* that we have been pursuing, and that through it we would see many invited to know Jesus. Remember this includes praying we would be a people who display Jesus' love to all who come across our path. We have made a pact (sorry, needed a great P word) that we will be this kind of people, so let us pray that together we would be a community of faith that reaches out individually and together.

3. Program / ACTS 4:12

We are planning to produce programs as a church to give us an opportunity to reach out to our sphere of influence and invite them in.

Stay attentive to what we are doing as a church to help you in your passion to reach out with the gospel. Make sure you are informed as to what is going on and the specific plans we are using to accomplish this.

Pay attention to what is happening in our church family and join in! We want to *plan* for God's best, and do that together in our programming!

Remember you are a part of a greater team, and participate with that team in seeking to accomplish God's mission for you, and us on earth.

4. Pursue / 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

You are part of the plan of God for your sphere of influence (Ephesians 2:10). You have already started to notice this and pursue people in your sphere of influence with your prayers, now is the opportunity to ask them to come and be a part of our church's planned events to share about Jesus.

Choose to invite those you are praying for! Choose to come to any of our programs ready to love and join us in making the gospel clear and filled with the love of those God has already chosen to make a part of His plan to accomplish great things for Him.

Actively pursue God's will for your life, and one of those things is to be the one through whom God is making His appeal.

5. Preparation / 1 PETER 3:15

Be ready to share your story which will make clear how Jesus has impacted you, and be ready to ask and answer questions that will help people take seriously the claims of Jesus and what He has done.

We have training available to you, and will include some at the end of this article. Take advantage of this training. Constantly be growing in your ability to share about Jesus which is how He defines greatness (Matthew 11:11).

Take the time to prepare for the conversations that this season will bring about as you prayerfully seek to be on mission with us for God and His glory.

- I will be a part of Cloverdale Baptist Church's CULTURE OF EVANGELISM. I will seek to maximize the attention placed on Jesus during these seasons and will seek to:
- I will perceive these seasons as an opportunity to share about Jesus
- I will pray: List at least two people you will be praying for
- I will actively engage in our programs to see people have an opportunity to know Jesus.
- I will seek to Pursue people in my sphere of influence with gospel conversations, my testimony, and inviting them to our strategic programs.
- I will seek to be prepared by writing out my testimony in a way that I can share with those who ask. I will seek to make the gospel content clear as I share the impact it has had on my life.

Signed: _____

Come, let us exalt His name together!

CONVERSATIONS TO EQUIP OUR CULTURE OF EVANGELISM

The key thing about any conversation is to listen well and ask good questions. Best conversations with people have come from talking less and listening well. You need to be curious about people and what makes them tick. Don't be a know-it-all, ask questions that you have had. The questions need to start with something relevant to where you are, i.e. (Is it raining, snowy mountains, where to find organic coffee, newspaper headlines of the day, waiting in a doctor's office, walking the dog, reading a book, been waiting long for the bus, local sports team...)

As well, you will ask different questions, depending on if you will see the person again or if it is a one-time encounter. Also, men asking men, and women asking women questions, works better, and more likely to get a response. Questions tend to be grouped around themes:

- Getting to know someone uses "Who are you" – questions;
- Values/beliefs "what do you believe" - questions;
- Explanations/definitions "what do you mean" – questions;
- Reasoning/thinking "why" questions;
- Consent "May I" – questions;
- Response "What will you do with this?" – questions

General conversation starters:

1. *Boy has it been raining lately, I mean this reminds me about the story of Noah? Ever heard about Noah?*
2. *I find Halloween scary, do you think there are demons and angels and things that we can't see?*
3. *I don't read the papers any more, all they report is bad news ... you know I was at church last Sunday, and they talked about some good news ... what a relief.*
4. *Love your dog, how old is he/she, name. Yeah, I had a dog, but he died, it was tough, but sometimes I wonder if dogs go to heaven? Do you think good dogs go to heaven? Do you think people go to heaven? Everyone? Why those and not others?*
5. *What is wrong with the world, gangs, shootings, seems like it is all coming apart. Do you think there is hope?"*
6. *Do you think the Canucks will ever win the cup without divine intervention? Do you believe in divine intervention?*
7. *I don't remember seeing you here before, how long have you been coming to the gym?*

Gospel Conversation starters. “Would you mind if I ask you a personal question about...” Or “it may be none of my business but I was wondering about [if they say “no,” then you need to stop asking. Be polite, and not pushy – pretend that you are being asked the question you are asking, and you don’t know that person very well (neighbour, co-worker, etc.)].

1. Are you a person of faith?

If they say “no” – ask “so what do you believe?”

2. What is your spiritual background (did you go to church as a kid/child)

- Does your background have any impact on you now?
- Who or what person has most shaped your beliefs?
- What has most influenced your current spiritual outlook/conclusions?

3. Your spiritual journey?

- What values and causes are you most passionate about? Why?
- What gives meaning or purpose to your life?

4. What do you think about God? What is God like?

- Have you heard about Jesus Christ?
- What do you think about Jesus Christ?
- Why do you think He came to earth?

5. What have you heard about Christians or church people?

- Would you say you are a spiritual person?
- Have you ever thought about the fact that God loves you?

6. Do you believe in prayer?

- Would you let me pray for you?
- Is there any way I can support you now?

PASTOR THOMAS’ TESTIMONY

Before: I grew up in a home where God was taught to me. We read the Bible as a family and I always knew that my parents were Christians. Although I wasn’t really sure what that meant. I was taught that God loved me and the world so much that he sent his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him wouldn’t go to be punished in Hell, but would have eternal life and live in *heaven* with our Savior. I really wanted to go to heaven especially considering the other option. So I had a conversation with my Dad. It went something like this:

Thomas: “Dad, I’ll go to heaven right?” You’ll get me there? He said, “Thomas have you ever done anything wrong? Like lying to me or Mom or talking back or not listening to us?” I said, “uh...yes.”

Dad: “Well, Thomas, that is a problem. That is called ‘sin’ and in order to go to heaven that sin has to be paid for. It has to be forgiven. There is a consequence to our sins.”

Thomas: “Well, can you get my sin forgiven for me, Dad?”

Dad: “No, I can’t son, you have to ask Jesus to forgive you. It’s just between you and God. I can tell you what the Bible says how to do it, but that’s it. You know that Jesus is God’s son and that he came to Earth. Well, Thomas, when he died on the cross he paid the price that it cost to get rid of your sin for you. He took the wrath of God that you deserved and then he rose again from the dead.”

Thomas: “Wow.”

Dad: “Yeah, it’s amazing.”

Thomas: “Can I pay him back for doing that for me? What do I have to do?”

Dad: “We can’t pay him back. It’s a gift, it’s nothing that you can work for, like an allowance that you do chores for. It’s free. All you have to do is believe that He is God, that he died on the cross to pay for your sins and that He didn’t stay dead, but came back to life two days later. If you believe this you will be saved.”

End of conversation.

This conversation happened on October 31st when I was 5 years old. My parents had already put me to bed, and I got up and yelled down the stairs that I wanted to be a Christian, that I didn’t want to go to *hell*, I wanted to go to heaven.

Since that day I have been growing in my relationship with Jesus Christ. When I was 16 I fully understood what I had done when I was 5 years old and I learned that Jesus told us to be baptized. Baptism was meant to be a public declaration that I was a Christian and that I believed in Jesus’ death and resurrection. I wanted to live my life following Jesus.

The summer after my baptism, I was attending a Church Conference in California. It was there that the speaker asked if anyone felt like God meant for them to serve Him, maybe even as a pastor or missionary. At that very point I could feel in my heart that that is what I was supposed to do. I never would have gone forward otherwise. From that point on I knew that I was supposed to be a pastor.

In that pursuit, through school and trial, the biggest lesson I have learned is that I must follow God no matter what, and that I can trust him with my life and eternity.

KEEPING THE GOSPEL IN YOUR TESTIMONY

Q: Are we supposed to be able to share our faith?

A: 1 Peter 3:15-16: *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

Q: Is the gospel an important part of this sharing? Can we just talk about how we helped ourselves, or our Grandma helped us, or our friend, or our auto-mechanic, or, or, or...

A: 2 Corinthians 4:5: *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord...”*

1 Corinthians 1:23: *“But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”*

Q: How can I structure my testimony?

A straightforward way to structure your testimony is in three stages:

- **Before:** Simply tell what your life was like before you surrendered to Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What was the key problem, emotion, situation or attitude you were dealing with? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner needs? (Examples of inner needs are loneliness, fear of death, insecurity. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, sex.)
- **How:** How were you converted? Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your searching. Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?
- **Since:** How has your life in Christ made a difference? How has his forgiveness impacted you? How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed? Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.

Important tips to remember

- **Stick to the point.** Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points.
- **Be specific.** Include events, genuine feelings and personal insights that clarify your main point. This makes your testimony tangible - something others can relate to.

- **Be current.** Tell what is happening in your life with God now, today.
- **Be honest.** Don't exaggerate or dramatize your life for effect. The simple truth of what God has done in your life is all the Holy Spirit needs to convict others of their sin and convince them of his love and grace.

Things to avoid

Stay away from “Christianese” phrases. These “foreign” or “churchy” words can alienate listeners and readers and keep them from identifying with your life.

Components of the gospel to include in your testimony

Based on the colours of the bracelet.

Yellow

The first colour on our bracelet is yellow. What does yellow symbolize? Heaven. God's Home. This is where we should all want to go, and it is where we can go if we are in right relationship with God. This is by grace, through faith, resulting in obedience.

Focus on God and His *holiness* (God has no sin and is morally perfect, and set apart from everyone else. There is no one like Him!) Heaven is a place to rightly want to go...The gospel is God-centred!

Black

But, we have one problem. That is we have sin in our lives. This black bead represents our sin. The Bible says that all of us have sin. Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” God does not allow any sin in heaven. So how can we get into heaven? We can't. God says the punishment of sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

Romans 6:23...“*For the wages of sin is death.*”

At this point you want people to understand that they have done wrong things and that these wrong things have broken their relationship with God, and they can't earn their way back...ever.

Red

This red bead symbolizes Christ's blood. When we accept His free gift of salvation God washes us with his blood. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place so that we don't have to receive the punishment we deserve for our sins! To make our relationship with God right, what we have to do is believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and accept what He did on the cross for us as a replacement for the punishment of sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 3:16-17; Acts 4:12

When we really believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, this will include submission to God and learning to follow Him with our lives.

At this point you want the people to understand what it means to believe, and follow. Please focus on the person of Jesus and what He has done for us. Repentance summarizes this concept well...a change of mind that impacts every area of life, a change of direction.

White

Once Jesus washes us with His blood we are pure. We are no longer black with sin, but we are clean like the white bead. Because God took the place of our sin, when we die, God can let us into heaven because our sin is paid for by Jesus' death on the cross. Romans 8:1; 1 Peter 2:24; John 1:12, 29; John 3:16

Green

After we believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we want to grow so that we can become closer to God. This green symbolizes growth much like the green grass grows. We can grow by reading the Bible, praying to God, going to church and learning to obey God in all of life (baptism and beyond).

Jude 1:20: But you dear friends build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

GETTING THE GOSPEL RIGHT

What is the gospel?

We often talk about being gospel-centred, or gospel-focused. To understand how to build a culture that is honouring to God, it is essential that we understand, experience, and constantly bathe in the gospel.

To begin this growth in being a gospel centred culture, we must grasp what the gospel is. There are many in our world who use the term but don't understand or experience the transformation.

The gospel is literally "*the good news*", and it is good because it addresses the deepest and most desperate need that all humans have. The Bible is clear that getting the gospel wrong is dangerous (Galatians 1:8-10) and leads to destruction.

It is very sad that there are those who think they are saved yet are not (Matthew 7:21-27), and those who are saved by grace through faith who are not living in the fullness of what experiencing the gospel daily provides.

To experience this good news there are five realities that must be grasped, believed and then lived in light of daily experience.

1. God: A rich experience of the gospel is God-centred and always includes a belief about who God is that matches how He has revealed Himself in His Word. There is only one true God, who is holy, and made us in His image to worship Him. His holiness refers to His separateness from His creation and His absolute purity.

2. Humans: All humans have sinned (Romans 3:23) and in this separated ourselves from God and placed us under His righteous wrath. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and the only way to pay for sin as sinners is to spend eternity separated from God in hell.

3. Jesus: God loved us so much that He, according to His eternal plan, sent Jesus, His only Son into the world. Jesus lived a perfect life, thus fulfilling the law Himself in our place, and then died on the cross in our place, taking on Himself the sins of those who believe in Him. He rose again from the dead, and in this conquered sin and death and displayed that God accepted this sacrifice and His wrath against sinners who believe in Jesus has been fully exhausted.

4. Humans: God now calls on humans, by grace through faith to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus alone for forgiveness. This belief in Jesus alone, is a faith that saves. When humans believe they are forgiven and reconciled to God, this new relationship becomes the centre of their lives.

5. Spirit-filled life: All who are saved by grace through faith are made a new creation, and seek to live a life that is surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus and devoted to His glory. This pursuit of holiness is a progression that He helps believers to pursue. The Spirit-filled life will include a desire to never ignore so great a salvation.

Mark Dever summarizes it like this...

A good way to summarize this good news is to biblically unpack the words God, Man, Christ, Response.

1. God. God is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). He is perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 2:5-8).

2. Man. All people, though created good, have become sinful by nature (Gen. 1:26-28, Ps. 51:5, Rom. 3:23). From birth, all people are alienated from God, hostile to God, and subject to the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3).

3. Christ. Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to bear God's wrath in the place of all who would believe in him, and rose from the grave in order to give his people eternal life (John 1:1, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Cor. 15:20-22).

4. Response. God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mark 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:9-10).

(Some of this material has been adapted from *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever, p. 43)

<https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-gospel/>

The gospel is so simple that a child can understand it, and yet so profound that it will be something that those who know Jesus will spend eternity celebrating (Ephesians 2:7).

These realities of the gospel are amazing, and must be grasped, believed and experienced to be saved and to live a victorious Christian life. It is not enough to know these, or even to believe them, they *must never be neglected* (Hebrews 2:3). The best way to "*escape*" this neglect is to preach the gospel to ourselves every day.

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST, CALLING OTHERS TO CHRIST

The deepest passion of any pastor who is authentic and understands his role in the local church is to shape God's people into conformity to Jesus, and to help the church to live on mission for God.

This twofold call is not easy, although it is related.

Here is how Paul puts it...

"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." **Colossians 1:28-29**

"My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" **Galatians 4:19**

Over this series we are taking a very hard look at who Jesus said that He is. This is not only to deepen our understanding of His self-revelation, not only to know Him more, but also so that we can grow in our conformity to His Image.

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." **2 Corinthians 3:18**

We become like Him when we behold His glory, and so seeing who He is we love Him and grow towards Him.

The goal of our church is to produce Christ-like followers of Jesus.

"It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master."
Matthew 10:25

Now this conformity to Jesus that we produce not only changes who we are, it changes what we do. When we grow in conformity to Jesus, we grow in our passion for His mission.

Peter chimes in...

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." **1 Peter 2:11-12**

The goal of the series over these two special seasons is to help us see Jesus, so that we can conform to His image, so that we will be effective on His mission.

So this series, becomes one where we seek to see *Jesus* in all His revealed glory, conform to His likeness, and reach out with His gospel!

How are you growing in your desire to have Christ formed in you? How is this impacting your life on mission for His glory?

