TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

September 2022

September 1, 2022 - Glorified in His Saints

When he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:10)

Paul says that Christ is coming precisely to be glorified and to be marvelled at. That is why he is coming. People stumble over the teaching that God exalts his own glory and seeks to be praised by his people because the Bible teaches us not to be like that. For example, the Bible says that love *"does not seek its own" (1 Corinthians 13:5, NASB).*

How can God be loving and yet be utterly devoted to *"seeking his own"* glory and praise and joy? How can God be for us if he is so utterly for himself? The answer is this: Because God is unique as an all-glorious, totally self-sufficient Being, he must be for himself if he is to be for us. The rules of humility that belong to a creature cannot apply in the same way to its Creator.

If God should turn away from himself as the Source of infinite joy, he would cease to be God. He would deny the infinite worth of his own glory. He would imply that there is something more valuable outside himself. He would commit idolatry.

No, we do not turn God's self-exaltation into love by demanding that God cease to be God. Instead, we must come to see that God is love precisely because he relentlessly pursues the praises of his name in the hearts of his people. Our praise for his greatness is the capstone of our joy and his greatness as he is glorified in his saints.

September 2, 2022 - Glory of the Immortal God

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:22–23)

It would be a great folly and a great tragedy if a man loved his wedding ring more than he loved his bride but that is what this passage says has happened. Human beings have fallen in love with the echo of God's excellence in creation, and lost the ability to hear the incomparable, original shout of love and power and glory.

The message of creation is this: There is a great God of glory and power and generosity behind all this awesome universe; you belong to him because he made you. He is patient with you in sustaining your rebellious life. Turn and trust him and delight yourself in him, not merely his handiwork.

According to Psalm 19:1–2, day pours forth the "speech" of that message to all who will listen in the day, speaking with blindingly bright sun and blue sky and clouds and untold shapes and colours and beautiful designs of all things visible. Night pours forth the "knowledge" of the same message to all who will listen at night, speaking with great dark voids and summer moons and countless stars and strange sounds and cool breezes and northern lights.

Day and night are saying one thing: God is glorious! Turn away from the creation as your supreme satisfaction and delight yourself in the glory of the Immortal God.

September 3, 2022 - Christ Loved The Church

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. (Ephesians 5:25–26)

If you only hope for unconditional love from God, your hope is great, but too small. Unconditional love from God is not the sweetest experience of his love. The sweetest experience is when his love says, *"I have made you so much like my Son that I delight to see you and be with you. You are a pleasure to me because you are so radiant with my glory."*

This sweetest experience is conditional on our transformation into the kind of people whose emotions and choices and actions please God. Unconditional love is the source and foundation of the human transformation that makes the sweetness of conditional love possible. If God did not love us unconditionally, he would not penetrate our unattractive lives, bring us to faith, unite us to Christ, give us his Spirit, and make us progressively like Jesus.

When he unconditionally chooses us, and sends Christ to die for us, and regenerates us, he puts in motion an unstoppable process of transformation that makes us glorious.

It is unspeakably wonderful that God would unconditionally set his favour on us while we are still unbelieving sinners. This is how Christ Loved the Church.

September 4, 2022 - For I Rejoice

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. (Psalm 104:31–34)

God rejoices in the works of creation because they point us beyond themselves to God himself. God means for us to be stunned and awed by his work of creation. But not for its own sake. He means for us to look at his creation and say: If the mere work of his fingers is so full of wisdom and power and grandeur and majesty and beauty, what must this God be like in himself!

These are but the backside of his glory, as it were, darkly seen through a glass. What will it be to see the glory of the Creator himself! Not just his works! A billion galaxies will not satisfy the human soul. God and God alone is the soul's end.

This is why Psalm 104 comes to a close in verses 31–34 with a focus on God himself. *"I will sing praise to my God while I have being. . . . For I rejoice in the Lord."* In the end it will not be the seas or the mountains or the canyons or the water spiders or the clouds or the great galaxies that fill our hearts to breaking with wonder and fill our mouths with eternal praise. It will be God himself and we will rejoice in the Lord.

September 5, 2022 - Every Authority and Power

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:24)

How far does the reign of Christ extend? The next verse, 1 Corinthians 15:25 says, *"He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."* The word all tells us the extent. So does the

word every in verse 24: *"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power."*

There is no disease, no addiction, no demon, no bad habit, no fault, no vice, no weakness, no temper, no moodiness, no pride, no self-pity, no strife, no jealousy, no perversion, no greed, no laziness that Christ will not overcome as the enemy.

The encouragement in that promise is that when you set yourself to do battle with the enemies of your faith and your holiness, you will not fight alone. Jesus Christ is now, in this age, putting all his enemies under his feet. Every rule and every authority and every power will be conquered.

So, remember that the extent of Christ's reign reaches to the smallest and biggest enemy of his glory in your life, and in this universe. It will be defeated.

September 6, 2022 - For Your Name's Sake

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. (Psalm 25:11)

In knowing what is right, God does not consult any authority higher than himself. His own worth is the ultimate value in the universe. Therefore, for God to do what is right means acting in a way that accords with this ultimate value.

The righteousness of God is the infinite zeal and joy and pleasure that he has in what is supremely valuable, namely, his own perfection and worth and if he were ever to act contrary to this eternal passion for his own perfections, he would be unrighteous — he would be an idolater.

How shall such a righteous God ever set his affection on sinners like us who have scorned his perfections? The wonder of the gospel is that his divine righteousness lays the very foundation of our salvation.

The infinite regard that the Father has for the Son makes it possible for me, a wicked sinner, to be loved and accepted in the Son, because in his death he vindicated the worth and glory of his Father.

The new understanding is that, because of Christ, instead of only praying, *"For your name's sake, pardon my guilt,"* we now pray, *"For Jesus's name's sake, O God, pardon my guilt."*

God is righteous. He does not sweep sin under the rug. If a sinner goes free, someone dies to vindicate the infinite worth of God's glory that the sinner defamed. That is what Christ did. Therefore, *"For your name's sake, O Lord"* and *"For Jesus's name's sake"* are the same and that is why we pray with confidence for forgiveness.

September 7, 2022 - In Christ Jesus

[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began. (2 Timothy 1:9)

Being "in Christ Jesus" is a stupendous reality. It is breathtaking to be united to Christ. Bound to Christ. If you are "in Christ" listen to what it means for you:

1) *In Christ Jesus you were given grace before the world was created.*

2) *In Christ Jesus you were chosen by God before creation. Ephesians 1:4,*

3) *In Christ Jesus you are loved by God with an inseparable love. Romans 8:38–39,*

4) *In Christ Jesus you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins. Ephesians 1:7,*

5) *In Christ Jesus you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to you. Second Corinthians 5:21,*

6) *In Christ Jesus you have become a new creation and a son of God. Second Corinthians 5:17, & Galatians 3:26,*

I pray that you will delight in exploring and exulting in the inexhaustible privilege of being "in Christ Jesus."

September 8, 2022 - Children of the Promise

It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Romans 9:8)

Picture the Old Testament Abraham as a pastor. The Lord says, *"I will bless you and prosper your ministry."* But the church is barren and bears no children.

What does Abraham do? He begins to despair of supernatural intervention. He is getting old. His wife remains barren. So he decides to bring about God's promised son without supernatural intervention. The result is not a "child of the promise," but a "child of the flesh," Ishmael.

Sarah is 90 years old. She has been barren all her life, Abraham is 100. The only hope for a child of promise is stunning, supernatural intervention.

That is what it means to be a "child of the promise" — to be born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). In Galatians 4:28 Paul says, *"You [Christians], like Isaac, are children of promise." You are "born according to the Spirit," not according to the flesh (Galatians 4:29).*

Think of Abraham as a pastor again. His church is not growing the way he believes God promised. He is weary of waiting for supernatural intervention. He turns to the "Hagar" of mere human devices and decides he can "attract people" without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

However, it will not be a church of Isaacs, but Ishmaelites — children of the flesh, not children of God. God save us from this kind of fatal success. By all means work but always look to the Lord for the decisive, supernatural work.

September 9, 2022 - Majesty and Meekness

"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope." (Matthew 12:18–21, quoting Isaiah 42)

The Father's very soul exults with joy over the servant-like meekness and compassion of his Son. When a reed is bent and about to break, the Servant will tenderly hold it upright until it heals. When a wick is smouldering and has scarcely any heat left, the Servant will not pinch it off, but cup his hand and blow gently until it burns again.

The worth and beauty of the Son come not just from his majesty, nor just from his meekness, but from the way these mingle in perfect proportion. When the angel cries out in Revelation 5:2, *"Who is worthy to open*

the scroll and break its seals?" the answer comes back*, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals" (Revelation 5:5).*

God loves the strength of the Lion of Judah. Jesus is worthy of the Father's delight not only as the Lion of Judah, but also as the slain Lamb. This is the peculiar glory of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son — the stunning mingling of majesty and meekness.

September 10, 2022 - Our God

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

This verse teaches that whenever God acts, he acts in a way that pleases him. God is never constrained to do a thing that he despises. He is never backed into a corner where his only recourse is to do something he hates to do. He does whatever he pleases. And therefore, in some sense, he has pleasure in all that he does.

This should lead us to bow before God and praise his sovereign freedom — that, in some sense, he always acts in freedom, according to his own "good pleasure," following the dictates of his own delights. God never becomes the victim of circumstance. He is never forced into a situation where he must do something in which he cannot rejoice. He is not trapped or cornered or coerced.

Even at the one point in history where he did what in one sense was the hardest thing for God to do, *"not spare his own Son" (Romans 8:32),* God was free and doing what pleased him. Paul says that the self-sacrifice of Jesus in death was *"a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2).* The greatest sin, and the greatest death, and the hardest act of God was, in some profound way, pleasing to the Father.

And on his way to Calvary, Jesus himself had legions of angels at his disposal. So, let us stand in awe and wonder. And let us tremble that not only our praises of God's sovereignty, but also our salvation through the death of Christ for us, hang on this: *"Our God is in heaven; he does whatever he pleases."*

September 11, 2022 - His Treasured Possession

"The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." (Deuteronomy 7:6)

What would the doctrines of grace — the old Puritan term for the teaching of God's sovereign grace in our salvation — sound like if every limb in that tree were coursing with the sap of Augustinian delight (that is, "Christian Hedonism")?

- *Total depravity is not just badness, but blindness to God's beauty, and deadness to the deepest joy.*
- *Unconditional election means that the completeness of our joy in Jesus was planned for us before we ever existed, as the overflow of God's joy in the fellowship of the Trinity.*
- *Limited atonement is the assurance that indestructible joy in God is infallibly secured for God's people by the blood of the new covenant.*
- *Irresistible grace is the commitment and the power of God's love to make sure we don't hold on to suicidal pleasures, and to set us free by the sovereign power of superior delights.*
- *Perseverance of the saints is the almighty work of God not to let us fall into the final bondage of inferior pleasures, but to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of fullness of joy in his presence, and pleasures at his right hand forevermore.*

Only the devastating freeness and unconditionality of electing grace — followed by all the other works of saving grace — let us take and taste such gifts for our very own without the exaltation of self, knowing we are His Treasured Possession.

September 12, 2022 - Wall of Fire

"Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst." (Zechariah 2:4–5)

There are mornings when I wake up feeling fragile. Vulnerable. It's often vague. No single threat. No one weakness. Just an amorphous sense that something is going to go wrong and I will be responsible. It's usually after a lot of criticism. Or maybe after a lot of expectations that have deadlines that seem too big and too many.

Instead of letting me sink into a paralysis of fear, or run to a mirage of greener pastures, God has awakened a cry for help and then answered with concrete promises.

There will be such prosperity and growth for the people of God that Jerusalem will not be able to be walled in any more. *"The multitude of people and livestock"* will be so many that Jerusalem will be like many villages spreading out across the land without walls. Prosperity is nice, but what about protection?

To which God says in verse 5, *"I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord."* Yes. That's it. That is the promise. The "I will" of God. That is what I need.

And it gets better. Inside that fiery wall of protection he says, "And I will be the glory in her midst." God is never content to give us the protection of his fire; he aims to give us the pleasure of his presence. I love the "I wills" of God!

September 13, 2022 - This is the Covenant

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33)

Jesus shatters any absolute dissociation of commandments and love. He says, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. . . Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father" (John 14:15, 21). "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (John 15:10).*

Thinking in terms of commandments and obedience did not stop Jesus from enjoying the love of his Father. And he expects that our thinking of him as one who commands will not jeopardize our love relationship with him either.

This is crucial to realize because the new covenant relationship that we have with God through Jesus Christ is not a covenant without commandments. The basic difference between the old covenant offered by God through the Mosaic law and the new covenant offered by God through Christ is not that one had commandments and the other doesn't.

The key differences are that (1) the Messiah, Jesus, has come and shed the blood of the new covenant (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:29) so that henceforth he is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that all

saving, covenant-keeping faith is conscious faith in him and (2) the promised new heart and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit have been given through faith.

September 14, 2022 - Love of Christ

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (Romans 8:35)

Christ is loving us now. A wife might say of her deceased husband: Nothing will separate me from his love. She might mean that the memory of his love will be sweet and powerful all her life. But that is not what Paul means here.

In Romans 8:34 it says plainly, *"Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."* The reason Paul can say that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ is because Christ is alive and is still loving us right now.

He is at the right hand of God and is therefore ruling for us. And he is interceding for us, which means he is seeing to it that his finished work of redemption does in fact save us hour by hour and bring us safely to eternal joy. His love is not just a memory, it is a moment-by-moment action by the omnipotent, living Son of God, to bring us to everlasting joy.

September 15, 2022 - Christ Gave Himself

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25

The love of Christ is effective in protecting us from separation, and therefore is not a universal love for all, but a particular love for his people — that is, those who, according to Romans 8:28, love God and are called according to his purpose.

This is the love of Ephesians 5:25, Christ has a love for all, and he has a special, saving, preserving love for his bride. You know you are part of that bride if you trust Christ. Anyone — no exceptions — anyone who trusts Christ can say, I am part of his bride, his church, his called and chosen ones, the ones who, according to Romans 8:35, are kept and protected forever no matter what.

This omnipotent, effective, protecting love does not spare us from calamities in this life, but brings us safely through them to everlasting joy with God.

Death will happen to us, but it will not separate us. So when Paul says that the "sword" will not separate us from the love of Christ, he means: even if we are killed, we are not separated from the love of Christ.

So the sum of the matter is this: Jesus Christ is right now mightily loving his people with omnipotent, moment-by-moment love that does not always rescue us from calamity but preserves us for everlasting joy in his presence even through suffering and death.

September 16, 2022 - Worthy of The Gospel

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ . . . not frightened in anything by your opponents. . . . For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake. (Philippians 1:27–29)

Paul told the Philippians that living worthy of the gospel of Christ meant fearlessness before enemies. Then he gave the logic of fearlessness.

The logic is this: God has given you two gifts, not just one — faith and suffering. That's what verse 29 says. Granted to you to believe and granted to you to suffer.

In this context that means: Both your faith in the face of suffering, and your suffering are gifts of God.

Why is this called living "worthy of the gospel of Christ"? Because the gospel is the good news that Christ's blood of the covenant infallibly obtained for all his people the sovereign working of God to give us faith and to govern our enemies — always for our eternal good. That's what the gospel secured. Therefore, to live that way shows the power and goodness of the gospel. Therefore, fear not. Your adversaries can do no more than God grants. And he will grant all the faith you need.

September 17, 2022 - Render to The Lord

What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord. (Psalm 116:12–14)

The very use of the language "rendering to God for all his benefits to me" makes me nervous. Payback can so easily imply that grace is like a mortgage. It's really generous, but you have to pay it back.

Paul said in Acts 17:25, God is not *"served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."* You can't give anything to God or do anything for God that he hasn't first given and done for you.

So in Psalm 116 what keeps the paying of vows free from the dangers of being treated like a debt payment is that the "payment" is, in reality, not an ordinary payment, but another act of receiving which magnifies the ongoing grace of God, not our resourcefulness.

The psalmist's answer to his own question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" is, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord." I call on the Lord to fill the cup. To pay back the Lord means to go on receiving from the Lord so that the Lord's inexhaustible goodness will be magnified.

Lifting up the cup of salvation signifies taking the Lord's satisfying salvation in hand and drinking it and expecting more. Then the psalmist says, "I will pay my vows to the Lord." How will they be paid? They will be paid by faith in the promise that more grace, all-sufficient grace, is always on the way.

September 18, 2022 - Free Grace

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Picture salvation as a house that you live in. It provides you with protection. It is stocked with food and drink that will last forever. It never decays or crumbles. Its windows open onto vistas of all-satisfying glory. God built it at great cost to himself and to his Son, and he gave it to you free and clear.

The "purchase" agreement is called a "new covenant." The terms read: "This house shall become and remain yours if you will receive it as a gift and take delight in the Father and the Son as they inhabit the house with you. You shall not profane the house of God by sheltering other gods nor turn your heart away after other treasures but find your contentment in the fellowship of God in this house."

Would it not be foolish to say yes to this agreement, and then hire a lawyer to draw up a payment schedule with monthly payments in the hopes of somehow balancing accounts and paying for the house?

You would be treating the house no longer as a gift, but a purchase. God would no longer be the free benefactor and you would be enslaved to a new set of demands that he never dreamed of putting on you.

If grace is to be free — which is the very meaning of grace — we cannot view it as something to be repaid. Praise God for Free Grace.

September 19, 2022 - All Your Anxieties

[Cast] all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Psalm 56:3 says, "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."

Notice: it does not say, "I never struggle with fear." Fear strikes, and the battle begins. So the Bible does not assume that true believers will have no anxieties. Instead, the Bible tells us how to fight when they strike.

It does not say, you will never feel any anxieties. It says, when you have them, cast them on God. When the mud splatters your windshield and you temporarily lose sight of the road and start to swerve in anxiety, turn on your wipers and squirt your windshield washer.

So my response to the person who has to deal with feelings of anxiety every day is to say: that's more or less normal. The issue is: How do we fight them?

The answer to that question is: we fight anxieties by fighting against unbelief and fighting for faith in grace and the way you fight this "good fight" (1 Timothy 6:12) is by meditating on God's assurances of grace and by asking for the help of his Spirit.

The windshield wipers are the promises of God that clear away the mud of unbelief, and the windshield washer fluid is the help of the Holy Spirit. The battle to be freed from sin — including the sin of anxiety — is fought "by the Spirit and belief in the truth".

The work of the Spirit and the word of truth. These are the great faith-builders. Without the softening work of the Holy Spirit, the wipers of the word just scrape over the blinding clumps of unbelief on the windshield. Both are necessary: the Spirit and the word.

September 20, 2022 - Look at the Birds

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matthew 6:25–26)

Anxiety over finances and housing and food and clothing can be intense. Some Christians live in situations where great poverty threatens life. But Jesus says in verse 30, that our anxiety comes from little faith in our Father's promise of grace: "O you of little faith."

Since your body and your life are vastly more complex and difficult to provide than food and clothing are, and yet God has, in fact, created and provided you with both, then surely he will be able and willing to provide you with food and clothing.

Moreover, no matter what happens, God will raise your body someday and preserve your life and body for his eternal fellowship.

If God is willing and able to feed such insignificant creatures as birds who cannot do anything to bring their food into being — as you can by farming — then he will certainly provide what you need, because you are worth a lot more than birds. You, unlike the birds, have the amazing capacity to glorify God by trusting, obeying, and thanking God.

September 21, 2022 - Consider the Lilies

"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:27–30)

Being anxious will simply not do you any good. That's a promise. This is not the main argument, but sometimes we just have to get tough with ourselves and say, "Soul, this fretting is absolutely useless. It promises nothing. You are not only messing up your own day, but a lot of other people's as well. Renounce it. Leave it with God and get on with your work."

Anxiety accomplishes nothing worthwhile. Believe it. Act on it. Compared to the lilies of the field you are a much higher priority for God, because you will live forever, and can thus bring him eternal praise as his loved children.

Nevertheless, God has such an overflow of creative energy and care, he lavishes it on flowers that last only a matter of days. So, he will certainly take that same energy and creative skill and use it to care for his children who will live forever. The question is: Will we believe this promise, and put away anxiety?

September 22, 2022 - Seek First

"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:31–34)

Do not think that God is ignorant of your needs. He knows all of them. And he is "your heavenly Father." He does not look on, indifferently, from a distance. He cares. He will act to supply your need when the time is best.

If you will give yourself to his cause in the world, rather than fretting about your private material needs, he will make sure that you have all you need to do his will and give him glory. He will supply all the food and drink and clothing — and everything else — that you need to do his will and glorify him.

God will see to it that you are not tested in any given day more than you can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). He will work for you, so that *"as [your] days, so shall [your] strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25, KJV).*

Every day has its appointed trouble but never more than you can bear by his grace. Every day will have mercies that are new every morning — mercies sufficient for that day's trouble (Lamentations 3:22–23). He will not expect any good deed from you for which he does not supply all the grace you need (2 Corinthians 9:8).

September 23, 2022 - Take Your Joy

"You have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." (John 16:22)

"No one will take your joy from you" because your joy comes from being with Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus means that you will never die; you will never be cut off from him.

So two things have to be true if your joy is never to be taken from you. One is that the source of your joy lasts forever and the other is that you last forever. If either you or the source of your joy is mortal, your joy will be taken from you.

It is so sad that many people have settled for just that! Eat, drink, and be merry they say, for tomorrow we die, and that's that (Luke 12:19). Food doesn't last forever, and I don't last forever. So let's make the most of it while we can. What a tragedy!

If you are tempted to think that way, please consider as seriously as you possibly can that if your joy comes from being with Jesus, "No one will take your joy from you" — not in this life, nor in the life to come.

Not life or death, or angels or principalities, or things present or things to come, or powers or height or depth, or anything else in all creation will be able to take our joy from us in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 8:38–39).

Joy in being with Jesus is an unbroken line from now to eternity. It will not be cut off — not by his death or ours.

September 24, 2022 - Beauty of The Lord

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

God is not unresponsive to the contrite longing of the soul. He comes and lifts the load of sin and fills our heart with gladness and gratitude. *"You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!" (Psalm 30:11–12).*

Our joy does not just rise from the backward glance in gratitude. It also rises from the forward glance in hope: *"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 and my God" (Psalm 42:5–6).*

In the end, the heart longs not for any of God's good gifts, but for God himself. To see him and know him and be in his presence is the soul's final feast. Beyond this there is no quest. Words fail. We call it pleasure, joy, delight. But these are weak pointers to the unspeakable experience: *"In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).*

September 25, 2022 - For as the Lightning

"For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day." (Luke 17:24)

I was flying at night, almost alone on the plane. The pilot announced that there was a thunderstorm. He would skirt it to the west to avoid turbulence.

As I sat there staring out into the total blackness, suddenly the whole sky was brilliant with light, and a cavern of white clouds fell away four miles beneath the plane and then vanished.

A second later, a mammoth white tunnel of light exploded from north to south across the horizon, and again vanished into blackness. Soon the lightning was almost constant, and volcanoes of light burst up out of cloud ravines and from behind distant white mountains of clouds.

I sat there shaking my head almost in unbelief. O Lord, if these are but the sparks from the sharpening of your sword, what will be the day of your appearing! And I remembered the words of Christ.

Even now as I recollect that sight, the word glory is full of feeling for me. I thank God that again and again he has awakened my heart to desire him, to see him, and to sit down to the feast and worship the King of Glory. The banquet hall is very large. Come and enjoy.

September 26, 2022 - Truth will set you Free

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31–32)

What is true freedom? Are you free?

Here are four things that need to be true if we are going to be fully free.

1) *If you don't have the desire to do a thing, you are not fully free to do it. Oh, you may muster the willpower to do what you don't want to do, but nobody calls that full freedom. It's not the way we want to live. There is a constraint and pressure on us that we don't want.*

2) *And if you have the desire to do something, but no ability to do it, you are not free to do it.*

3) *And if you have the desire and the ability to do something, but no opportunity to do it, you are not free to do it.*

4) *And if you have the desire to do something, and the ability to do it, and the opportunity to do it, but it destroys you in the end, you are not fully free — not free indeed — when you do it.*

To be fully free, we must have the desire, the ability, and the opportunity to do what will make us happy forever. No regrets. And only Jesus, the Son of God who died and rose for us, can make that possible. If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

September 27, 2022 - I Am Who I Am

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." (Exodus 3:14)

One implication of the magnificent name, I AM WHO I AM, is that this infinite, absolute, self-determining God has drawn near to us in Jesus Christ.

In John 8:56–58 Jesus is answering the criticism of the Jewish leaders. He says, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." T*he Jews then said to him, *"You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"* Jesus said to them*, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."*

Could Jesus have taken any more exalted words upon his lips? When Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am," he took up all the majestic truth of the name of God, wrapped it in the humility of servanthood,

offered himself to atone for all our rebellion, and made a way for us to see the glory of this infinite, absolute, all-sufficient God — without fear.

In Jesus Christ we who are born of God have the unspeakable privilege of knowing Yahweh as our Father — I AM WHO I AM — the God who exists, whose personality and power is owing solely to himself, who never changes, from whom all power and energy in the universe flows and to whom all creation should conform its life. May those who know the name of God put their trust in him (Psalm 9:10).

September 28, 2022 - Treasures in Heaven

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 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)

Stop being satisfied with the small yields of pleasure that get eaten up by the moths of inflation and the rust of death. Invest in the blue-chip, high-yield, divinely insured securities of heaven.

Devoting a life to material comforts and security and thrills is like throwing money down a rat hole. But investing a life in the labour of love yields dividends of joy unsurpassed and unending:

"Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. [And thus] provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail" (Luke 12:33).

This message is very good news: Come to Christ, in whose presence are fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. Join us in the labour of love. For the Lord has spoken: It is more blessed to love than to live in luxury! More blessed now, and forever.

September 29, 2022 - Do not be Anxious

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

One of the things we are thankful for when we let our requests be known to God is his promises. These are the ammunition in the cannon that cuts down the unbelief that produces worry. So here's how I fight.

When I am anxious about my ministry being useless and empty, I fight unbelief with the promise of Isaiah 55:11. *"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."*

When I am anxious about being too weak to do my work, I battle unbelief with the promise of Christ, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).*

When I am anxious about decisions I have to make about the future, I battle unbelief with the promise, *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you" (Psalm 32:8).*

When I am anxious about facing opponents, I battle unbelief with the promise, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).*

When I am anxious about being sick, I battle unbelief with the promise, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).*

These and many others are how we learn to not be anxious.

September 30, 2022 - Endured a Hard Struggle

Recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. (Hebrews 10:32–35)

These Christians have earned the right to teach us about costly love. The situation appears to be this: In the early days of their conversion, some of them were imprisoned for their faith. The others were confronted with a difficult choice: Shall we go underground and stay "safe," or shall we visit our brothers and sisters in prison and risk our lives and property? They chose the way of love and accepted the cost.

But were they losers? No. They lost property and gained joy! They joyfully accepted the loss. In one sense, they denied themselves. It was real and costly. But in another sense, they did not. They chose the way of joy. Evidently, these Christians were motivated for prison ministry the same way the Macedonians (of 2 Corinthians 8:1–9) were motivated to relieve the poor. Their joy in God overflowed in love for others enduring a hard struggle.