TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

October 2023

October 1, 2023 - Rejoice in the Lord

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 (just his fingers! Psalm 8:3) 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. 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 as we rejoice in the Lord.

October 2, 2023 - Marriage held in Honour

Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Hebrews 13:4

People today are getting married later in life than their parents or grandparents. As of 2022, the average age at which people get married is 28 for women and 30 for men. This is eight years later in life than the average bride and groom of the 1960s.

As many have noted, today's spike in singleness and single-person households is, in part, the result of a widespread cultural erosion of marriage, both inside and outside of the Church. Over the past 60 years, marriage has taken a social and cultural beating thanks to the legalization of no-fault divorce and abortion, the widespread use of birth control, the proliferation of easily accessible hook-up apps, and the casual dominance of pornography.

These realities undermine the maturity, self-control, and responsibility required for stable and successful marriages. Whether or not an individual chooses to engage in these practices, they decrease everyone's chances of finding a partner interested in or ready for marriage. Let us create a culture of purity and hold marriage in honour.

October 3, 2023 - Answers are in Jesus

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossian 2:3

Each person at some point grapples with the question, `where did life come from? What is my purpose in life?" and `Where am I going? I was talking to a of friend of mine recently about these issues. He stated that he didn't believe in God, and that Christian belief was unscientific.

In the Bible, the first line of Isaiah 40:22 reads, *"It is God who sits above the circle of the earth."* Thus, the Bible presents the Earth as a sphere, and not as being flat. The Bible also gives us an explanation of how the Earth came into being, *"in the beginning God created," (Genesis 1:1)* and how life started. When it's all said and done, a person either believes in an eternal God, or eternal matter.

The Bible says that every individual is made in the `image of God.' While modern society pushes the line that one should be only concerned with one's own goals and the accumulation of things. However, this sort of self-centred existence is not fulfilling. If a person is to find fulfilment in life and to understand the meaning of life and where they are going, then this can only be found when you, as a person, decides to walk with God and understand what His purpose is for your life. If you are seeking answers to the deeper questions of life, then you will find the answers in Jesus, God's Son.

October 4, 2023 - No to Division

Those who cause divisions are worldly-minded and devoid of the Spirit. Jude 1:19

I am voting "No" on the "Voice" proposed changed to the Australian Constitution, because this proposal is going in the wrong direction and is serving other agendas. We are all Australians, and we should never contemplate constitutional changes that promote and solidify racial division. To try to divide Australians on the basis of race, skin colour or length of ancestry is more about politics than justice or good government.

Despite having "native title" to far more land per head of population than all other Australians, tribal aboriginals often live in degraded communal enclaves with poor community protection especially for women and children.

Political power should not be granted to one race of Australians – Australia is now home to people from all over the world. Most have made permanent homes here. All who embrace Australian citizenship should be treated equally before the law.

The Voice proposal would make a permanent racial division in Australia. But how will the favoured race be continually identified? Will DNA evidence be needed to prove racial identity, given that those who identify as `aboriginal' has risen by over 40% since the last census.

People identifying as Aboriginals already have more representation in Parliament than their numbers would justify and already have several voices. Huge government departments and billions of dollars are already representing aboriginal interests every year, but their conditions do not improve. We need policies to unite all Australians, and not things which cause division.

October 5, 2023 - Then comes the End

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.

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 of his honour. 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 now in part and fully when the end comes.

October 6, 2023 - 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. 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. This is why he is worthy in God's eyes to open the scrolls of history and unfold the last days.

But the picture is not complete. How did the Lion conquer? The next verse describes his appearance: "And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6). 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.

October 7, 2023 - Working for the Lord

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord. Colossians 3:23-24

Work embraced as a calling expresses the glory of God, and it's part of—very literally—following Jesus. Through our work God provides for us and for our families, contributes to the common good, and also gives us a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. He has given us work as the way to fulfill His mandate to us … to take dominion over the world he has created.

In the pagan world, manual labour was seen as just for the lower classes. But Christianity saw it differently —work was understood to be edifying, part of being made in God's image, something we could and should do to God's glory. When you head back to the construction site, to the office, to school, wherever, be refreshed and ready to work as unto the Lord.

October 8, 2023 - His Good Pleasure

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 mocked. 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.

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 is by his good pleasure.

October 9, 2023 - Good Success

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Joshua 1:8

Blaming our issues on shadowy oppressors "out there," which political parties do whenever they assure their voters that they are victims, encourages the mindset that only perpetuates poverty, relational brokenness, and addictions. It's based on an impoverished worldview that replaces our ability to act with anger and treats people as less than fully human, refusing them the dignity of being responsible moral actors whose fate and whose communities are at least partially within their responsibility and control. In fact, the victim worldview is the thing most likely to empower those who seek to keep us disadvantaged at the expense of everyone else.

The adage that government is usually the problem rather than the solution is even more true than when it was coined. However, outrage is not a strategy that will bring long lasting solutions that will give you good success.

October 10, 2023 - God has Chosen You

"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)

The doctrines of grace are the teachings of God's sovereign grace in our salvation.

- Total depravity is not just badness, but blindness to God's beauty, and deadness to the deepest joy of knowing God in all his fullness.
- 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.

This is one of the beauties of the biblical doctrines of grace: their worst devastations prepare us for their greatest delights resting in the knowledge that God has chosen us.

October 11, 2023 - A Soft Answer

A Soft Answer turns away Wrath. Proverbs 15:1

A person's sex is acknowledged, not assigned. There are many things that doctors learn about a baby when it's born, like height, weight, and blood type. Those things aren't assigned. They're acknowledged. Other things are assigned at birth, like a name. Babies are assigned names exclusively on the preferences of their parents. Changing a name before, during, or even after birth has no real impact on the person because it's not a biological part of their identity.

So, if some things are acknowledged and other things are assigned, which category does a baby's sex fall into? Is it more like being given a name by parents, or is it more like learning the blood type from the doctor? It is helpful to acknowledge that some things about us as human beings are assigned and others are not, and that the kinds of things that fit into these respective categories are radically different kinds of things.

Sex is determined by our reproductive system. In most cases, humans are born with two sex chromosomes, either x/x or x/y. The watershed issues of our day are anthropological. The greatest deceptions of our day, the ones to which we'll need to know how to reply, have to do with what it means to be human. Typically, when these issues come up, temperatures rise. Christians need to be able to speak the truth, but also employ the Proverbial wisdom that "a soft answer turns away wrath."

October 12, 2023 - I Will be the Glory

"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)

We should be amazed at how the Lord Jesus has preserved our lives and ministries. The temptation to run away from stress should never win out. Instead of sinking into a paralysis of fear, or run to a mirage of greener grass, God awakens a cry for help and then answers with concrete promises.

God promises such prosperity and growth for the people of God that Jerusalem will not be able to be walled in anymore. "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 we need and

if it is true for the vulnerable villages of Jerusalem, it is true for us as children of God. There is a "how much more" after every promise for those who are in Christ.

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. We should love the "I wills" of God!

October 13, 2023 - 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 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; (2) the old covenant has therefore become "obsolete" (Hebrews 8:13) and does not govern the new-covenant people of God (2 Corinthians 3:7–18; Romans 7:4, 6; Galatians 3:19); and (3) the promised new heart and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit have been given through faith. This is the new covenant.

October 14, 2023 -See My Glory

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory." (John 17:24)

God does indeed make much of us, he adopts us into his family, but he does so in a way that draws us out of ourselves to enjoy his greatness.

Would not the greatest, most Christ-exalting joy be found in watching Jesus if we could spend all day with him, we would be bursting with, "You're amazing!"

- He answers the hardest question, and his wisdom is amazing.
- He touches and heals a filthy, oozing sore, and his compassion is amazing.
- He raises a dead lady at the medical examiner's office, and his power is amazing.
- He predicts the afternoon's events, and his foreknowledge is amazing.
- He sleeps during an earthquake, and his fearlessness is amazing.
- He says, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), and his words are amazing.

We would walk around with him all afternoon and be utterly amazed as we see His Glory.

October 15, 2023 - The 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)

Notice three things:

1. Christ is loving us 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.

2. This 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.

3. 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.

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 that we might know the love of Christ.

October 16, 2023 - Gospel Promises

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. 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. When Paul says, don't be frightened by your opponents, he had two reasons in his mind why they don't need to be frightened:

1. One reason is that the opponents are in the hand of God. Their opposition is a gift from God. He governs it. That's the first point of verse 29.
2. And the other reason not to be afraid is that your fearlessness, that is, your faith, is also in the hand of God. It too is a gift. That is the other point of verse 29.

Therefore, fear not. Your adversaries can do no more than God grants. And he will grant all the faith you need. These promises are blood-bought and sealed. They are gospel promises.

October 17, 2023 - What Shall I Render

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.” In other words, you can’t give anything to God or do anything for God that he hasn’t first given to you 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. It does not magnify our resourcefulness.

I will 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.

October 18, 2023 - Grace is to be Free

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 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.

October 19, 2023 - Blessed is the Nation

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Psalm 33:12

Here is a list of what will make a nation great.

1. We must have the freedom to raise our children, free from harmful ideologies.
2. We cannot allow our children to be deprived of their sense of safety based on their sense of self-identity.
3. We must have pro-family decision-makers in power.
4. We must not give consent to anti-family decisions on international matters.
5. Safety for our families: our kindergartens, schools, villages, cities, country, and borders must be a top priority.

6. Adequate opportunities for those with children: we must not let those who choose to have children be worse off than those who do not; we must not let someone having a child risk being dragged into poverty.
7. We must not let finances get in the way of having children.
8. We must have respect for the elderly.
9. We must have a competitive education, vocational education, higher education, and a well-functioning health care system.

October 20, 2023 - No One will 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)

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. 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.

How 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.

October 21, 2023 - The 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).*

But 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 as we gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

October 22, 2023 - 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." The 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."

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.

October 23, 2023 - 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)

The message that needs to be shouted from the houses of high finance is this: Secular man, you are not nearly desirous enough! Quit being satisfied with the little 2% 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. For the Lord has spoken: It is more blessed to love than to live in luxury! More blessed now, and forever and we lay up treasures in heaven.

October 24, 2023 - Is Holiness Communicable?

If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or touches cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy? Haggai 2:12

In Haggai 2:12–19, God drives home a very telling point to the prophet. If we place an unclean thing together with a clean one, the cleanness of the latter will not rub off onto the former. If I rub my dirty and ink-stained hands on a clean towel, the cleanness of the towel will not rub off onto my hands: rather it is dirt that is transferred, and the towel becomes dirty.

By this means the Lord made clear to Haggai and Judah that sin is contagious, but righteousness is not. We are not Christians simply because we belong to a good church, a good family, or a fine community. Moreover, a good profession of faith does not make us holy or godly.

Sin and injustice are all around us, and they readily rub off on us if we are not careful. To stand against this requires faith: it means that, being regenerate, we are governed by the power of God, not by the pressures of the group. We go against the current rather than with it because the currents of our time are replete

with injustice and ungodliness. We do not allow our speech to be governed by tale-bearing and nonsense but by grace and consideration as we remain holy.

October 25, 2023 - God made us Very Good

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

In the biblical account of reality, humans exist to glorify and love God, and to serve as His special representatives and co-rulers in creation. Human inventions should help towards achieving those ends, extending our abilities, and mitigating the effects of the Fall. Wanting to replace ourselves with our devices assumes that humanity is the central problem of the world that needs to be solved.

Much of our public life also assumes the basic idiocy and inadequacy of humans: take health officials more concerned with controlling people than limiting the spread of a virus or legislation quashing parental rights in order to "affirm" gender-confused minors.

God never intends to optimize us into efficient machines. Apparently, He considers being human as something "good," even "very good." So much so, in fact, He took on flesh Himself.

Technology is good but needs a telos—a purpose for existing. That purpose cannot be to replace, transcend, or circumvent God's good design for human beings. In short, technology and public policy should be human-shaped, in recognition of us being made in the image and likeness of God.

October 26, 2023 - 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 we should fight.

When we are anxious about our ministry being useless and empty, we 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 we are anxious about being too weak to do our work, we 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 we are anxious about decisions we have to make about the future, we 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 we are anxious about facing opponents, we battle unbelief with the promise, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Do not be anxious but be overcomers by relying on the promises and power of God.

October 27, 2023 - I Will Be Gracious

"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Exodus 33:19)

Moses needed hope that God really could have mercy on a stiff-necked people who had just committed idolatry and scorned the God who brought them out of Egypt.

To give Moses the hope and confidence he needed, God said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." In other words, "My choices do not depend on the degree of evil or good in man but solely upon my free, sovereign will. Therefore no one can say he is too evil to be shown grace."

The doctrine of unconditional election is the great doctrine of hope for the worst of sinners. It means that when it comes to being a candidate for grace, your background has nothing to do with God's choice. That's good news.

If you have not been born again and brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ, do not sink into hopelessness thinking that the excessive rottenness or hardness of your past life is an insurmountable obstacle to God's gracious work in your life. God loves to magnify the freedom of his grace by saving the worst of sinners.

Turn from your sin; call upon the Lord. Even in this devotion, he is being gracious to you, and giving you strong encouragement to come to him for mercy as he will be gracious.

October 28, 2023 - Look to Jesus

[Look] to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

Love is the way of joy and you should choose it for that very reason, lest one be found in begrudging obedience to the Almighty or chafing under the privilege of being a channel of grace or belittling the promised reward. Jesus did not contradict this principle.

The greatest labour of love that ever happened was possible because Jesus pursued the greatest imaginable joy, namely, the joy of being exalted to God's right hand in the assembly of a redeemed people: "For the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross!"

In saying this, the writer means to give Jesus as another example, along with the saints of Hebrews 11, of those who are so eager for and confident in the joy God offers that they reject the *"fleeting pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25)* and choose ill-treatment in order to be aligned with God's will.

It is not unbiblical, therefore, to say that at least part of what sustained Christ in the dark hours of Gethsemane was the hope of joy beyond the cross. This does not diminish the reality and greatness of his love for us, because the joy in which he hoped was the joy of leading many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). His joy is in our redemption, which redounds to God's glory. We share the joy with Jesus and God gets the glory as we look to Jesus.

October 29, 2023 - The Word of God

He said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." (Deuteronomy 32:46–47)

The word of God is not a trifle; it is a matter of life and death. If you treat the Scriptures as a trifle or as empty words, you forfeit life. Even our physical life depends on God's word, because by his word we were created (Psalm 33:6; Hebrews 11:3), and "he upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3).

And our spiritual life begins by the word of God: *"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18). "You have been born again . . . through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:23)*. Not only do we begin to live by God's word, but we also go on living by God's word: *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3)*.

So our physical life is created and upheld by the word of God, and our spiritual life is quickened and sustained by the word of God. Indeed, the Bible is "no empty word for you" — it is your life! The foundation of all joy is life. Nothing is more fundamental than sheer existence — our creation and our preservation. All this is owing to the word of God.

October 30, 2023 - The Greatness of His Power

The immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe . . . (Ephesians 1:19)

The omnipotence of God means eternal, unshakable refuge in the everlasting glory of God no matter what happens on this earth and that confidence is the source and power of radical obedience to the call of God.

Is there anything more freeing, more thrilling, or more strengthening than the truth that God Almighty is your refuge — all day, every day, in all the ordinary and extraordinary experiences of life? If we believed this, if we really let this truth of God's omnipotence get hold of us, what a difference it would make in our personal lives and in our ministries! How humble and powerful we would become for the saving purposes of God!

The omnipotence of God means refuge for the people of God. And when you really believe that your refuge is the omnipotence of God Almighty, there is a joy and a freedom and a power that spills over in a life of radical obedience to Jesus Christ. The omnipotence of God means reverence, recompense, and refuge for his covenant people.

I invite you to accept the terms of his covenant of grace: Turn from sin and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ; and the omnipotence of God Almighty will be the reverence of your soul, the recompense of your enemies, and the refuge of your life — forever.

October 31, 2023 - Walk in Freedom

I shall walk in freedom, for I have sought your precepts. (Psalm 119:45)

An essential element of joy is freedom. None of us would be happy if we were not free from what we hate and free for what we love. Where do we find true freedom?

The picture is one of open spaces. The word frees us from smallness of mind. *"God gave Solomon . . . breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore" (1 Kings 4:29).* The word frees us from threatening confinements. *"He brought me out into a broad place" (Psalm 18:19).*

Jesus says, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). The freedom he has in mind is freedom from the slavery of sin (John 8:34)*. Or, to put it positively, it is freedom for holiness.

The promises of God's grace provide the power that makes the demands of God's holiness an experience of freedom rather than fear and confinement. Peter described the freeing power of God's promises like this:

“Through [his precious and very great promises] you become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (2 Peter 1:4).

When we trust the promises of God, we sever the root of corruption and sinful desire by the power of a superior promise. How crucial is the word that breaks the power of counterfeit pleasures! And how vigilant we should be to light our paths and load our hearts with the word of God as we walk in freedom.