TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

December 2023

December 1, 2023 - God Made us Alive

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:5)

The great missionary hope is that when the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, God himself does what man cannot do: he creates the faith that saves. The call of God does what the call of man can't. It raises the dead. It creates spiritual life. It is like the call of Jesus to Lazarus in the tomb, "Come out!" And the dead man obeyed and came out. The call created the obedience by creating life (John 11:43). That is how anyone is saved.

We can waken someone from sleep with our call, but God's call can summon into being things that are not (Romans 4:17). God's call is irresistible in the sense that it can overcome all resistance. It is infallibly effective according to God's purpose — so much so that Paul can say, *"Those whom [God] called he also justified" (Romans 8:30), even though* we are only justified by our faith.

In other words, God's call is so effectual that it infallibly creates the faith through which a person is justified. All the called are justified according to Romans 8:30. But none is justified without faith (Romans 5:1). So the call of God cannot fail in its intended effect. It irresistibly brings into being the faith that justifies. The sovereign grace of God, doing the humanly impossible, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, is the way God made us alive.

December 2, 2023 - Medicine for the Christian

"All things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)

Sovereign grace is the spring of life for the Christian. For what the Christian loves best is the experience of the sovereign grace of God filling and overflowing for the good of others.

Christians love the experience of *"not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).* They bask in the truth that the fruit of their Christian labour is entirely of God (1 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 11:36).

They feel only gladness when the Master says, *"Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).* They leap like lambs over the truth that God has taken the impossible weight of new creation off their shoulders and put it on his own. Without begrudging, they say, *"Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Corinthians 3:5).*

When they get an opportunity to speak they say, *"I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience" (Romans 15:18).*

*"All things are possible with God!" — i*n front the words give hope, and behind they give humility. They are the antidote to despair and the antidote to pride — perfect medicine for the Christian.

December 3, 2023 - Receive a Hundredfold

"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and

brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29–30)

What Jesus means here is that he himself makes up for every sacrifice.

- If you give up a mother's nearby affection and concern, you get back one hundred times the affection and concern from the ever-present Christ.
- If you give up the warm comradeship of a brother, you get back one hundred times the warmth and comradeship of Christ.
- If you give up the sense of at-homeness you had in your house, you get back one hundred times the comfort and security of knowing that your Lord owns every house.

Jesus says, *"I promise to work for you, and be for you, so much that you will not be able to speak of having sacrificed anything."*

What was Jesus's attitude to Peter's "sacrificial" spirit? Peter said, *"We have left everything and followed you" (Mark 10:28)*. Is this the spirit of "self-denial" commended by Jesus? No, it is rebuked. Jesus said to Peter, "*No one ever sacrifices anything for me that I do not pay back a hundredfold — yes, in one sense even in this life, not to mention eternal life in the age to come."*

December 4, 2023 - Love Kindness Walk Humbly

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

No one has ever felt unloved because he was told that the attainment of his joy would make another person happy. I have never been accused of selfishness when justifying a kindness on the basis that it delights me. On the contrary, loving acts are genuine to the degree that they are not done begrudgingly.

The good alternative to begrudgingly is not neutrally or dutifully, but gladly. The authentic heart of love loves kindness (Micah 6:8); it doesn't just do kindness.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. (1 John 5:2–4)

Being born of God gives a power that conquers our worldly aversion to the will of God. Now his commandments are not "burdensome," but are the desire and delight of our heart. This is the love of God: not just that we do his commandments, but also that they are not burdensome.

Since love for God is doing his will gladly rather than with a sense of burden, and since love for God is the measure of the genuineness of our love for the children of God, therefore our love for the children of God must also be done gladly as we love kindness and walk humbly with God.

December 5, 2023 - His Glorious Creativity

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

A truly meaningful education capitalises on the God-given capacity for leisure incorporating a broad survey of subjects–including those that seem to have nothing to do with "getting a job."

Often, those subjects assumed to be irrelevant to a job are the most consequential. Do we want geneticists capable of splicing genes and rewriting DNA who have never taken an ethics class? Do we want elementary teachers versed in all social-emotional learning theories of second graders, but who do not know even the basics of the history of Western civilization?

Education should be an antidote to boredom because it should teach us how to wrestle with the questions boredom brings up, such as: Who am I? Why am I here? What is life for? Am I living well? What should I love?

Philosophers call these the "ultimate" questions. Christians know that the source of these questions is God Himself, and that bearing God's image makes life inherently meaningful. To learn about God's world, through history, art, philosophy, mathematics, science, and literature, is to learn about Him. Thus, it is always beneficial, even if it accomplishes nothing more than giving us a wider glimpse of His glorious creativity.

December 6, 2023 - Draw Near to God

[God] gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:6–8)

James teaches us that there is a precious experience of "more grace" and God "drawing near" to us. Surely this is a wonderful experience — more grace and a special nearness of God.

There are precious experiences of the love of God that require that we fight pride, seek humility, and cherish the nearness of God. Those are the conditions. Of course, the conditions themselves are the work of God in us. But they are no less conditions we fulfill.

If this is true, I fear that the unqualified, biblically careless reassurances today that God's love is all unconditional may stop people from doing the very things the Bible says they need to do in order to enjoy all the peace that they so desperately crave. In trying to give peace through "unconditionality" we may be cutting people off from the very remedy the Bible prescribes.

The divine love of election, and the divine love of Christ's death, and the divine love of our regeneration — our new birth — are all absolutely unconditional. But let us also declare the biblical truth that the fullest and sweetest experiences of the grace of God and the nearness of God will be enjoyed by those who daily humble themselves and draw near to God.

December 7, 2023 - Too Easily Pleased

"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth." (Isaiah 58:13–14)

It is possible to pursue God without glorifying God. If we want our quest to honour God, we must pursue him for the joy of fellowship with him. Consider the Sabbath as an illustration of this. The Lord rebukes his people for seeking their own pleasure on his holy day. But what does he mean? Does he mean that we should not seek our joy on the Lord's Day? No, because the next thing he says is, "Call the Sabbath a delight." And in verse 14, "You shall take delight in the Lord." So what he is criticizing is that they are

delighting in their own business on the Sabbath rather than delighting in the beauty of their God and the rest and holiness that this day stands for.

He's not rebuking their pleasure. He's rebuking the weakness of it. As C. S. Lewis said, "We are far too easily pleased." They have settled for secular interests and thus honour them above the Lord.

The enjoyment of God and the glorification of God are one. His eternal purpose and our eternal pleasure unite in one experience of worship. This is what the Lord's Day is for. Indeed, this is what all of life is for. So, get real satisfaction in the Lord and don't be too easily pleased with the world.

December 8, 2023 - Our Maker Our Provider

Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses — as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honour than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. (Hebrews 3:3–6)

The people who boast and hope in Jesus Christ are the house of God. Which means that Jesus this very day — not just back in Moses's day or in his own days on earth — but this very day is our Maker, our Owner, our Ruler, and our Provider. Jesus is called the "builder" of this house. Moses was not the builder, he was part of the house, Jesus built the house and does not let his house be destroyed or fall into ruin.

Then the writer changes the imagery — from builder and house, to son and servant. Christ did become part of the house, his honour is far above Moses. Moses was a servant, Christ is the Son, the heir.

By all means, let us respect and give Moses his due. But the point of the whole book of Hebrews is: Christ is greater. Greater in every way. He is the builder of the house of God's people and he is the Son in the house of God's people. Let us respect Moses, but let us worship Jesus — our Maker, our Provider.

December 9, 2023 - Bring The Gospel

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

As we draw near to the time when we celebrate Jesus' birth and the end of the year, we find ourselves both looking back on the year that's gone and looking forward to the next with anticipation of our Lord Jesus' guidance for the coming year. Undoubtably, you look with some excitement and yet some uncertainty to the year ahead.

I would remind us all of Jesus' words in his Sermon on the Mount where he says, *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"*

Having told us *"Do not worry"*, Jesus then tells us to *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* So, at this Christmas time let us seek God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit asking for guidance as we desire to bring the Gospel to the people of the world.

December 10, 2023 - Compassionate and Merciful

Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (James 5:11)

Behind all disease and disability is the ultimate will of God. Not that Satan is not involved — he is probably always involved in one way or another with destructive purposes (Acts 10:38). But his power is not decisive. He cannot act without God's permission.

That is one of the points of Job's sickness. The text makes it plain that when disease came upon Job, *"Satan . . . struck Job with loathsome sores" (Job 2:7).* His wife urged him to curse God. But Job said, *"Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).* And again the inspired author of the book (just as he did in 1:22) commends Job by saying, *"In all this Job did not sin with his lips."*

In other words: This is a right view of God's sovereignty over Satan. Satan is real and may have a hand in our calamities, but not the final hand, and not the decisive hand.

James makes clear that God had a good purpose in all Job's afflictions. So even though Satan was involved, the ultimate purpose was God's, and it was *"compassionate and merciful."*

December 11, 2023 - Enter His Rest

To whom did [God] swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:18–19)

Even though the people of Israel saw the waters of the Red Sea divide and walked through the Sea on dry ground, the moment they got thirsty, their hearts were hard against God and they did not trust him to take care of them. They cried out against him and said that life in Egypt was better.

That is what the book of Hebrews was written to prevent. How many professing Christians make a start with God. They hear that their sins can be forgiven and that they can escape hell and go to heaven. And they say: "What have I got to lose? I'll believe."

But then in a week or a month or a year or ten years, the test comes — a season of no water in the wilderness. A weariness with manna and subtly a growing craving for the fleeting pleasures of Egypt.

This is a terrifying condition to be in — to find yourself no longer interested in Christ and his word and prayer and worship and missions and living for the glory of God and to find all the fleeting pleasures of this world more attractive than the things of the Spirit.

If that is your situation, I plead with you to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking in this text. Give heed to the word of God. Do not harden your heart. Wake up to the deceitfulness of sin. Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our great confession, and hold fast to your confidence and hope in him and enter his rest.

December 12, 2023 - But God Gives

Someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each of the seeds its own body. (1 Corinthians 15:35–38)

Paul is comparing how a seed is planted in one form and comes forth in another form with a "body" different from all other bodies. This is a remarkable statement of God's intimate involvement in the way God designs each seed to bring forth its own unique plant.

Paul is not teaching about evolution here, but he is showing how he takes God's intimate involvement with creation for granted. Evidently, Paul cannot imagine that any natural process should be conceived of without God's doing it.

So, when we marvel at the wonders of the human eye and the remarkable structure of the ear, we are not to marvel at the processes of chance, but at the mind and the creativity and the power of God.

It is not as though in some impersonal way he set it all in motion a billion years ago. Rather, he is the one who owns it because he made it. It is today his handiwork and bears the marks of his Creator claim. But God gives it life.

December 13, 2023 - God the Holy Spirit

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

The Holy Spirit has been called "the forgotten God." But He's also, according to Scripture, at the heart of the Christian life. "I believe in the Holy Spirit," says the Nicene Creed, "the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is both worshiped and glorified, who has spoken to us through the prophets."

Now, there's a longstanding debate between Eastern and Western churches about whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from the Son as well. What Christians agree on, however, is that the Spirit is God. He's a Person, not a force. He inspired the Scriptures. He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He is the Comforter sent by Jesus, the One who gives us ears to hear the Gospel, and who intercedes for us when we pray, indwelling us to this day.

We are His temples, and He is the Pledge of our inheritance and the guarantee that the faith we now confess in the Triune God will one day be sight. Let us worship the triune God of Scripture including God the Holy Spirit.

December 14, 2023 -Change Is Possible

Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

Christianity means change is possible. Deep, fundamental change. It is possible to become tenderhearted when once you were callous and insensitive. It is possible to stop being dominated by bitterness and anger. It is possible to become a loving person, no matter what your background has been.

The Bible assumes that God is the decisive factor in making us what we should be. With wonderful bluntness, the Bible says, "Put away . . . all malice" and be "tenderhearted" (Ephesians 4:31–32). It does not say, "If you can . . . " Or, "If your parents were tenderhearted . . . " Or, "If you have not been terribly abused . . . " It says, "Be . . . tenderhearted."

This is wonderfully freeing. It frees us from the terrible fatalism that says change is impossible for me. It frees me from mechanistic views that make my background my destiny.

God's commands always come with freeing, life-changing truth to believe. Don't be a fatalist. Be a Christian. God is alive. Christ is risen. The promises are true. Change is possible.

December 15, 2023 - Living and Active

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

The word of God is our only hope. The good news of God's promises and the warnings of his judgment are sharp enough and living enough and active enough to penetrate to the bottom of my heart and show me that the lies of sin are indeed lies.

Abortion will not create a wonderful future for me. Neither will cheating, or dressing provocatively, or throwing away my sexual purity, or keeping quiet about dishonesty at work, or divorce, or vengeance. What rescues me from this deception is the word of God.

The word of God's promise is like throwing open a great window of bright morning sunlight on the roaches of sin masquerading as satisfying pleasures in our hearts. God has given you his good news, his promises, his word to protect you from the deep deceptions of sin that try to harden your heart and lure it away from God and lead it to destruction.

Be of good cheer in your battle to believe. Because the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, it will penetrate deeper than any deception of sin has ever gone and reveal what is truly valuable and what is truly worth trusting and loving.

December 16, 2023 - Grace to Help

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. (Hebrews 4:16)

Every one of us needs help. We are not God. We have needs. We have weaknesses. We have confusion. We have limitations of all kinds. We need help.

But every one of us has something else: We have sins. And therefore at the bottom of our hearts we know that we do not deserve the help we need. And so we feel trapped.

I need help to live my life, and to handle death, and to cope with eternity — help with my family, my spouse, my children, my loneliness, my job, my health, my finances. I need help. But I don't deserve the help I need.

So, what can I do? I can try to deny it all and be a superman or a superwoman, who doesn't need any help. Or I can try to drown it all and throw my life into a pool of sensual pleasures. Or I can simply give way to the paralysis of despair.

But God declares over this hopeless situation: Jesus Christ became a High Priest to shatter that despair with hope, and to humble that superman or superwoman, and to rescue that drowning wretch.

You are not trapped. Say no to that lie. We need help. We don't deserve it. But we can have it. You can have it right now and forever. If you will receive and trust in your High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, you will find grace to help.

December 17, 2023 - To Live is Christ

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

How is it "gain" to die?

1) Our spirits will be made perfect (Hebrews 12:22–23). There will be no more sin in us. We will be done with the inner war and the heartrending disappointments of offending the Lord who loved us and gave himself for us.

2) We will be relieved of the pain of this world (Luke 16:24–25). The joy of the resurrection will be ours along with freedom from pain. Jesus tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man to show the great reversal that is coming at death.

3) We will be given profound rest in our souls (Revelation 6:9–11). There will be a serenity beneath the eye and care of God that surpasses anything we have known here on the softest summer evening by the most peaceful lake at our most happy moments.

4) We will experience a deep at-homeness (2 Corinthians 5:8). The whole human race is homesick for God, without knowing it. When we go home to Christ, there will be a contentment beyond any sense of security and peace we have ever known.

5) We will be with Christ (Philippians 1:21–23). Christ is a more wonderful person than anyone on earth. He is wiser, stronger, and kinder than anyone you enjoy spending time with. He is endlessly interesting. He knows exactly what to do and what to say at every moment to make his guests as glad as they can possibly be. He overflows in love and with infinite insight showing us that to live is Christ.

December 18, 2023 - Humble Gratitude

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful . . . (2 Timothy 3:1–2)

Notice how ingratitude goes with pride, abuse, and insubordination. In another place Paul says, "Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking . . . but instead let there be thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:4). So, it seems that gratitude, thankfulness, is the opposite of ugliness and violence.

The reason this is so is that the feeling of gratitude is a humble feeling, not a proud one. It is other-exalting, not self-exalting. And it is glad-hearted, not angry or bitter.

The key to unlocking a heart of thankfulness and overcoming bitterness and ugliness and disrespect and violence is a strong belief in God, the Creator and Sustainer and Provider and Hope-giver. If we do not believe we are deeply indebted to God for all we have and hope to have, then the very spring of gratitude has gone dry.

When the high spring of gratitude to God fails at the top of the mountain, soon all the pools of thankfulness begin to dry up further down the mountain. Pray for a great awakening of humble gratitude.

December 19, 2023 - Good from Evil

Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

Now, this is amazing. Don't miss it. It could save you years of wasted living. What this verse is saying is that if you want to become mature and understand and appreciate the more solid teachings of the word, then the rich, nutritional, precious milk of God's gospel promises must transform your moral senses — your spiritual mind — so that you can discern between good and evil.

Or, let me put it another way. Getting ready to feast on all God's word is not first an intellectual challenge; it is first a moral challenge. If you want to eat the solid food of the word, you must exercise your spiritual senses so as to develop a mind that discerns between good and evil. This is a moral challenge, not just intellectual.

The pathway to maturity and to solid biblical food is not first becoming an intelligent person, but becoming an obedient person. What you do with alcohol and sex and money and leisure and food and computers, and the way you treat other people, has more to do with your capacity for solid food than where you go to school or what books you read.

This is so important because in our highly technological society we are prone to think that education — especially intellectual education — is the key to maturity. There are many Ph.D.'s who choke in their spiritual immaturity on the things of God. And there are many less-educated saints who are deeply mature and can feed with pleasure and profit on the deepest things of God's word distinguishing good from evil.

December 20, 2023 - Right to Die

All those who hate me love death. Proverbs 8:36

'Right' to Die Becomes Recommendation to Die. Last year, the Canadian government sanctioned the killing of 13,241 people by the euphemistically named Medical Assistance in Dying. MAiD accounted for 4.1% of all deaths in Canada in 2022 and is the fifth leading cause of death in that country.

The slide down this slippery slope began by first legalising doctor-assisted suicide for people facing "imminent death" and then expanding it step by step until it was available to virtually anyone who asks for it.

In fact, now Canadians don't even need to ask. Doctors and nurse practitioners there, have been told they have a professional obligation to bring up the option of MAiD to any patients considered "eligible." That kind of suggestion can sound an awful lot like a recommendation to someone struggling with whether or not to live.

These numbers are just going up, and they will until enough Canadians refuse to participate in Canada's culture of death and recognise there is no "Right to Die".

December 21, 2023 - Voicing Their Convictions

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

A lawsuit against a member of the Finnish Parliament accused of violating a law prohibiting "War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity," has been dismissed. Päivi Räsänen's crime was quoting Bible verses in support of traditional understandings of human nature and sexuality.

According to a state prosecutor, the problem wasn't citing the Bible, but "Räsänen's interpretation and opinion about the Bible verses that (were) criminal." In other words, what Christians have always believed ...

In an Alliance Defending Freedom International press release, Räsänen said: It isn't a crime to tweet a Bible verse, or to engage in public discourse with a Christian perspective. The attempts made to prosecute me for expressing my beliefs have resulted in an immensely trying four years, but my hope is that the result will stand as a key precedent to protect the human right to free speech. I sincerely hope other innocent people will be spared the same ordeal for simply voicing their convictions.

December 22, 2023 - I Will Bless You

Since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." (Hebrews 6:13–14)

There is one Person whose worth and honour and dignity and preciousness and greatness and beauty and reputation is more than all other values combined — ten thousand times more — namely, God himself. So, when God takes an oath, he swears by himself.

If he could have gone higher, he would have gone higher. Why? To give you strong encouragement in your hope. What God is saying in swearing by himself is that it is as impossible that he will break his word of promise to bless us as it is that he will ever despise himself.

God is the greatest value in the universe. There is nothing more valuable or wonderful than God. So, God swears by God. And in doing that he says, "I mean for you to have as much confidence in me as it is possible to have."

Now this is our God, the God who is reaching as high as he can reach to inspire your unshakable hope in him. So, flee to God for refuge. Turn from all the superficial, self-defeating hopes of the world, and put your hope in God. There is nothing and no one like God who has promised to bless you.

December 23, 2023 - The World He Created

For everything God has created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. 1 Timothy 4:4

The biblical narrative describes human beings (and therefore human bodies) as created by God with purpose. This purpose implies the kinds of physical and moral norms that can undergird a stable understanding of health. The fall explains why things aren't as they were created to be, undergirding a helpful and objective understanding of "sickness" and disability.

The redemption provided in Jesus Christ aims at the restoration of God's creation, which means healing is possible. Thus, the work of medicine is a redemptive activity, with ethical possibility and moral boundaries. Medicine was built on this framework of reality and, without it, could devolve into a moral chaos, where up is confused with down, right with wrong, and health with "whatever we want." Canada's so-called "Medical Assistance in Dying" program is the most obvious case in point. There's nothing about the program that is medical, or assistance. Rather, it's a harm done to unburden us of having to care by killing the one who needs it.

In a more rational age, MAiD would be seen as the horrifying evil it is. But in ours, evil and destruction are seen as good. This is how a society runs toward death: not only by denying God but by denying the obvious realities of the world He created.

December 24, 2023 - The Weaker Vessel

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7

Jiu-jitsu athlete Taelor Moore fought an opponent who was not only more than 60 pounds heavier than her but was a male. She was not warned she would be fighting a man. Afterward, the North American Grappling Association clarified its policy to say that women should be informed when facing a male opponent who identifies as a female and given the option to opt out.

A man took four gold medals at a women's jiu-jitsu competition in Georgia, and some divisions consisted of more male competitors than females. This, one of the female competitors, said has left "[t]he majority of the women ... scared to even speak out about this matter. … There's so many girls just not signing up now because they are allowing this."

That much should be obvious. Allowing men to fight women is not only unfair, but also dangerous. How many men will take home medals or women will take home injuries before that message gets through that women are the weaker vessel.

December 25, 2023 - Increased Thanksgiving – Happy Christmas

It is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

Gratitude to God is a joyful emotion. We have a sense of joyful indebtedness for his grace. So in a sense in the very emotion of gratitude, we are still the beneficiaries. By its very nature, gratitude glorifies the giver. When we feel thankful, we acknowledge our need and God's beneficence, God's fullness, the riches of his glory.

Just like I humble myself and exalt the server in the restaurant when I say, "Thank you," so I humble myself and exalt God when I feel gratitude to him. The difference, of course, is that I really am infinitely in debt to God for his grace, and everything he does for me is free and undeserved.

The point is that gratitude glorifies the giver. It glorifies God. This is Paul's final goal in all his labours. Yes, his labours are for the sake of the church — the good of the church. But the church is not the highest goal.

The wonderful thing about the gospel is that the response it requires from us for God's glory is also the response that is most natural and joyful; namely, thankfulness for grace. God's all-supplying glory in giving and our humble gladness in receiving are not in competition. Joyful thankfulness glorifies God. A life that gives glory to God for his grace and a life of deepest gladness are the same life, which makes them one of increasing thankfulness.

December 26, 2023 - Save to the Uttermost

He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

Jesus would not be able to save us forever if he did not go on interceding for us forever. This means our salvation is as secure as Christ's priesthood is indestructible. This is why we needed a priest so much greater

than any human priest. Christ's deity and his resurrection from the dead secure his indestructible priesthood for us.

This means we should not talk about our salvation in static terms the way we often do — as if I did something once in an act of decision, and Christ did something once when he died and rose again, and that's all there is to it. That's not all there is to it.

This very day I am being saved by the eternal intercession of Jesus in heaven. Jesus is praying for us and that is essential to our salvation. We are saved eternally by the eternal prayers (Romans 8:34) and advocacy (1 John 2:1) of Jesus in heaven as our High Priest. He prays for us and his prayers are answered because he prays perfectly on the basis of his perfect sacrifice which saves us to the uttermost.

December 27, 2023 - Who do you say I Am?

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:15-16

The key to civil and productive conversations is to ask good questions. The right question can turn monologues into dialogues, surface-level discussions into deeper ones, and might even open a closed mind or two.

Here are some questions that are helpful for creating good conversations:

First: What do you mean by that? The definition of words shapes debate. Don't assume you are always using the same dictionary.

Second: How do you know that is true? Assertions aren't arguments, and this question takes you beyond comparing opinions. Third: Where did you get this information? Fourth: How did you come to this conclusion? Everyone has a story. What if you're wrong? and, What if you're right? Ideas have consequences. These questions take ideas to their logical conclusion. Then the best question: What are you thankful for? Hopefully all the questions will help to answer who Jesus is and how we should respond to him.

December 28, 2023 - I Will Magnify Him

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. (Psalm 69:30)

There are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying. The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is.

When David says, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving," he does not mean, "I will make a small God look bigger than he is." He means, "I will make a big God begin to look as big as he really is."

We are not called to be microscopes. We are called to be telescopes. Christians are not called to be con-men who magnify their product out of all proportion to reality, when they know the competitor's product is far superior. There is nothing and nobody superior to God. The calling of those who love God is to make his greatness begin to look as great as it really is.

That's why we exist, why we were saved, as Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think, and act in a way that will make God look as great as he really is. Be a telescope for the world of the infinite starry wealth of the glory of God and magnify him.

December 29, 2023 - Loving Families

God puts the lonely in Families. Psalm 68:6

A short while ago, the World Health Organization declared loneliness a new public health crisis. While it's great that global leaders are recognizing the dangerous social and even physical risks of social isolation, this crisis is anything but new.

The WHO's new declaration will lead to more research into the detrimental effects loneliness can have on our health and a new "Commission on Social Connection," to "promote social connection as a priority and accelerate the scaling up of solutions."

Bureaucracy-speak aside, any successful efforts to "promote social connection" must take into account what it means to be human. We aren't defective machines or problems to be solved. We are persons created in the image of God, made for connection with Him and with one another. We need families. We need dads and mums. We need to be the kind of people who bear with one another, even across distance and relational tension. This means we need hearts of flesh that only God–not statecraft–can give us. We need intact loving families.

December 30, 2023 - Gratitude to God

Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)

When gratitude springs up in the human heart toward God, he is magnified as the wealthy source of our blessing. He is acknowledged as giver and benefactor and therefore as glorious. But when gratitude does not spring up in our hearts at God's great goodness to us, it probably means that we don't want to pay him a compliment; we don't want to magnify him as our benefactor.

There is a very good reason that human beings by nature do not want to magnify God with thanksgiving or glorify him as their benefactor. The reason is that it detracts from our own glory, and all people by nature love their own glory more than the glory of God.

At the root of all ingratitude is the love of one's own greatness. For genuine gratitude admits that we are beneficiaries of an unearned bequest. We are cripples leaning on the cross-shaped crutch of Jesus Christ. We are paralytics living minute by minute on God's mercy. We are children asleep in heaven's stroller.

The natural person, apart from saving grace, hates to think of himself in these images: unworthy beneficiary, cripple, paralytic, child. They rob him of his glory by giving it all to God.

Therefore, while a man loves his own glory, and prizes his self-sufficiency, and hates to think of himself as sin-sick and helpless, he will never feel genuine gratitude to the true God and so will never magnify God as he ought, but only himself.

December 31, 2023 - Peace in Life and Death

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14)

Here we are in the modern age — the age of the Internet, smartphones, space travel, and heart transplants — and our problem is fundamentally the same as always: Our consciences condemn us and make us feel unacceptable to God. We are alienated from God and our consciences bear witness.

We can cut ourselves, or throw our children in the sacred river, or give a million dollars to charity, or serve in a soup kitchen, or a hundred forms of penance or self-injury, and the result will be the same: The stain remains and death terrifies.

We know that our conscience is defiled — not with external things like touching a corpse, a dirty diaper, or a piece of pork. Jesus said it is what comes out of a man that defiles, not what goes in (Mark 7:15–23). We are defiled by attitudes like pride and self-pity and bitterness and lust and envy and jealousy and covetousness and apathy and fear.

The only answer in this modern age, as in every other age, is the blood of Christ. When your conscience rises up and condemns you, where will you turn? Hebrews 9:14 gives you the answer: The answer is: Turn to the blood of Christ. Turn to the only cleansing agent in the universe that can give you relief in life, and peace in death.