TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

February 2024

February 1, 2024 - Christian Faithfulness

Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Jeremiah 29:5

Christian faithfulness, especially at a time of cultural chaos, isn't really about trying to do great things for God. Afraid for the nation? Buy a house. Plant a garden. Get married. Have lots of babies. Help your children marry well, be great grandparents. You needn't run for office, start a podcast or lead a thinktank. The most powerful & countercultural work happens in your home.

It can be easy to equate "greatness" with fame or followers or something loud and big. But God asks for faithfulness in whatever our hand finds to do. That was true for the exiles in Babylon, and it's still true today. Practice Christian Faithfulness in the home.

February 2, 2024 - Grace is Power

By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

Grace is not only God's disposition to do good for us when we don't deserve it. It is an actual power from God that acts and makes good things happen in us and for us.

God's grace was God's acting in Paul to make Paul work hard. So when Paul says, "Work out your own salvation," he adds, "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12–13). Grace is power from God to do good things in us and for us.

This grace is ever-cascading over the infinitesimal waterfall of the present, from the inexhaustible river of grace. In the next five minutes, you will receive sustaining grace flowing to you. The proper response to the grace you experienced in the past is thankfulness, and the proper response to grace promised to you in the future is faith. We are thankful for the past grace of the last year, and we are confident in the grace for the new year and beyond and the power it will provide.

February 3, 2024 - Salvation not Condemnation

Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27–28)

The death of Jesus bears sins. This is the very heart of Christianity, and the heart of the gospel, and the heart of God's great work of redemption in the world. When Christ died he bore sins. He took sins not his own. He suffered for sins that others had done, so that they could be free from sins.

This is the answer to the greatest problem in your life, whether you feel it as the main problem or not. There is an answer to how we can get right with God in spite of being sinners. The answer is that Christ's death is an offering "to bear the sins of many." He lifted our sins and carried them to the cross and died there the death that we deserved to die.

Now what does this mean for my dying? It means that my death is no longer punitive. My death is no longer a punishment for sin. My sin has been borne away. My sin is "put away" by the death of Christ. Christ took the punishment.

Why then do I die at all? Because God wills that death remain in the world for now, even among his own children, as an abiding testimony to the extreme horror of sin. In our dying we still manifest the external effects of sin in the world. But death for God's children is no longer his wrath against them. It has become our entrance into salvation not condemnation.

February 4, 2024 - God who has Mercy

It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. (Romans 9:16)

We will get from God, as believers in Jesus, mercy. Whatever pleasures or pains come our way will all be mercy. This is why Christ came into the world: *"in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy" (Romans 15:9). We were born again "according to his great mercy" (1 Peter 1:3). We pray daily "that we may receive mercy" (Hebrews 4:16); and we are now "waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life" (Jude 1:21). If any Christian proves trustworthy, it is "by the Lord's mercy [he] is trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 7:25).*

In Luke 17:5–6, the apostles plead with the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And Jesus says, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." In other words, the issue in our Christian life and ministry is not the strength or quantity of our faith, because that is not what uproots trees. God does. Therefore, the smallest faith that truly connects us with Christ will engage enough of his power for all you need.

The fullest obedience and the smallest faith obtain the same thing from God: mercy. A mere mustard seed of faith taps into the mercy of God's tree-moving power. And flawless obedience leaves us utterly dependent on mercy. The point is this: Whatever the timing or form of God's mercy, we never rise above the status of beneficiaries of mercy. We are always utterly dependent on what we do not deserve. Let us humble ourselves and rejoice and "glorify God for his mercy!"

February 5, 20224- Perfected for all Time

By a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14)

This verse is full of encouragement for imperfect sinners like us, and full of motivation for holiness. It means that you can have assurance that you stand perfected and completed in the eyes of your heavenly Father not because you are perfect now, but precisely because you are not perfect now but are "being sanctified," "being made holy" — that, by faith in God's promises, you are moving away from your lingering imperfection toward more and more holiness. That's the point of Hebrews 10:14.

Does your faith make you eager to forsake sin and make progress in holiness? That's the kind of faith that in the midst of imperfection can look to Christ and say, "You have already perfected me in your sight." This faith says, "Christ, today I have sinned. But I hate my sin. For you have written the law on my heart, and I long to do it. And you are working in me what is pleasing in your sight (Hebrews 13:21). And so, I hate the sin that I still do; and I hate the sinful thoughts that I contemplate."

This is the true and realistic faith that saves. This is not the boast of the strong. It is the cry of the weak in need of a Saviour. I invite you, I urge you, to be weak enough to trust Christ in this way know that you are being perfected for all time.

February 6, 2024 - Christ who Satisfied

You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:13–15)

The reason that union with Christ makes a great difference for the believer is that Christ achieved a decisive triumph over the devil at Calvary. He did not remove Satan from the world, but he disarmed him to the extent that the weapon of damnation was stripped from his hand.

He cannot accuse believers of sin. Which is the only accusation that can destroy us. He cannot bring us to utter ruin. He can hurt us physically and emotionally. He can tempt us and incite others against us. But he cannot destroy us.

The decisive triumph of Colossians 2:13–15 is owing to the fact that "the record of debt that stood against us" was nailed to the cross. The devil made that record his chief accusation against us. Now he has no accusation that can hold in the court of heaven. He is helpless to do the one thing he wants to do most: damn us. He can't. Christ bore our damnation. The devil is disarmed.

Death is still our enemy. But it is defanged. The viper's poison has been drained away. The deadly sting is gone. The sting of death was sin. And the damning power of sin was in the demand of the law. But thanks be to Christ who satisfied the law's demand.

February 7, 2024 - Made that Way

He brought me to the banqueting table, and his banner over me was love. Song of Solomon 2:4

According to the Pew Research Center, 2023 marked a record high of people over 40 who have never been married. In a related study earlier in the year, a majority of people said that an enjoyable career and friendships were at the top of the list of things that would provide a "fulfilling life," but thought that having children or being married as "not too or not at all important."

This while plenty of other studies are showing that these expectations are not yielding the expected results. Happiness is at an all-time low and the most consistently happy people are the married ones. Meanwhile, job satisfaction varies wildly based on income, age, and sense of meaningful contribution.

Of course, marriage alone cannot make the unhappy happy or the unfulfilled fulfilled, but there's a clear picture in these numbers. Those who live for more than themselves tend to find more satisfaction and more happiness. It's as if we were made that way.

February 8, 2024 - Draw Near to God

Let us draw near with a true heart. (Hebrews 10:22)

The command we are given in this passage is to draw near to God. The great aim of the writer of the book of Hebrews is that we get near God, that we have fellowship with him, that we do not settle for a Christian life at a distance from God.

This drawing near is not a physical act. It's not building a tower of Babel by your achievements to get to heaven. It's not necessarily going to a church building. Or walking to an altar at the front. It is an invisible

act of the heart. You can do it while standing still, or while lying in a hospital bed, or on the train as you commute to work.

This is the centre of the gospel — this is what the garden of Gethsemane and Good Friday are all about — that God has done astonishing and costly things to draw us near to himself. He has sent his Son to suffer and to die so that through him we might draw near. Everything that he has done in the great plan of redemption is so that we might draw near. And that nearness is for our joy and for his glory.

He does not need us. If we stay away, he is not impoverished. He does not need us in order to be happy in the fellowship of the Trinity. But he magnifies his mercy by giving us free access through his Son, in spite of our sin, to the one Reality that can satisfy our souls completely and forever, namely, himself. This is God's will for you, that you would draw near to God.

February 9, 2024 - My Grace is Sufficient

Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)

The need for inner strength arises not just from the depletions of everyday stress, but from the suffering and afflictions that come from time to time. Suffering is inevitably on the way to heaven. When it comes, the heart may waver and the narrow way that leads to life may look impossibly hard.

Paul cried out three times with this question because of some affliction in his life. He asked for relief from his thorn in the flesh. But God's grace did not come in the form he asked. It came in another form. Christ answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Here we see grace given in the form of Christ's sustaining power in unrelieved affliction — one grace given, we could say, within the circle of another grace denied. And Paul responded with faith in the sufficiency of this grace: "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God often blesses us with a "grace given" in the circle of "grace denied." We should not be surprised that God gives us wonderful graces in the midst of suffering that we had asked him to spare us. He knows best how to apportion his grace for our good and for his glory.

February 10, 2024 - We Gain Eternal Life

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)

Here are two great incentives from Jesus to become a World Christian and to dedicate yourself to the cause of Frontier Missions. As a goer or a sender.

1. Every impossibility with men is possible with God (Mark 10:27). The conversion of hardened sinners will be the work of God and will accord with his sovereign plan. We need not fear or fret over our weakness. The battle is the Lord's, and he will give the victory.

2. Christ promises to work for us, and to be for us so much that, when our missionary life is over, we will not be able to say we've sacrificed anything (Mark 10:29–30).

When we follow his missionary prescription, we discover that even the painful side effects work to improve our condition. Our spiritual health, our joy, improves a hundredfold. And when we die, we do not die. We gain eternal life.

February 11, 2024 - Can AI Be Helpful?

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Genesis 2:15

There's no sense in trying to put the AI genie back in a bottle. For better or worse, the technology is here to stay. We must develop an ability to evaluate its legitimate uses from its illegitimate uses. In other words, we must know what AI is for, before experimenting with what it can do.

That will require first knowing what human beings are for. For example, Genesis is clear (and research confirms) that human beings were made to work. After the fall, toil "by the sweat of your brow" is a part of work. The best human inventions throughout history are the tools that reduce needless toil, blunt the effects of the curse, and restore some dignity to work.

We should ask whether a given application of AI helps achieve worthy human goals. Does it restore dignity to human work, or will it leave us worse off?

Perhaps most importantly, we must govern what AI is doing to our relationships. Already, our most impressive human inventions—such as the printing press, the telephone, and the internet—facilitated more rapid and accurate human communication, but they also left us more isolated and disconnected from those closest to us.

In a sense, the most important questions as we enter the age of AI are not new. We must ask, what are humans for? And, how can we love one another well? These questions won't easily untangle every ethical dilemma, but they can help distinguish between tools designed to fulfill the creation mandate and technologies that try to take us somewhere else.

February 12, 2024 - That Leads to Life

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

Sometimes in the midst of the afflictions and ordinary stresses of daily life, we may cry out, "How long, O Lord? I can't see beyond today's pain. What will tomorrow bring? Will you be there for that affliction too?"

This question is utterly urgent, because Jesus said, "The one who endures to the end will be saved" (Mark 13:13). We tremble at the thought of being among "those who shrink back and are destroyed" (Hebrews 10:39). We are not playing games. Suffering is a horrible threat to faith in God's grace.

Therefore, it is a wonderful thing to hear Peter promise to afflicted and weary Christians. The assurance that he will not delay beyond what we can endure, and that he will abolish the flaws we bemoan, and that he will establish forever our holiness — this assurance comes from the God of "all grace."

God is not the God of some grace, He is "the God of all grace" — including the infinite, inexhaustible stores of grace that we need to endure to the end. Faith in that grace, strengthened by the memory of past grace, is the key to enduring on the narrow and hard road that leads to life.

February 13, 2024 - Joy of Your Master

I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. (Revelation 20:12)

What about the last judgment? Will our sins be remembered? Will they be revealed? The failures and shortcomings of . . . believers . . . will enter into the picture on the Day of Judgment. But the sins and shortcomings of believers will be revealed in the judgment as forgiven sins, whose guilt has been totally covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

By this your life bears witness to the grace of God the Father, the worth of the blood of God the Son, Jesus, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. These bear witness that your life is eternal and according to these you will have your rewards as you enter into the everlasting joy of your Master.

February 14, 2024 - God and Truth

What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged." (Romans 3:3–4)

Our concern with truth is an inevitable expression of our concern with God. If God exists, then he is the measure of all things, and what he thinks about all things is the measure of what we should think.

Not to care about truth is not to care about God. To love God passionately is to love truth passionately. Being God-centred in life means being truth-driven in ministry. What is not true is not of God.

Ponder these points on God and truth:

1) God Is the Truth - John 15:26 (God the Spirit): "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."

2) Not Loving the Truth Is Eternally Ruinous - Second Thessalonians 2:10: The wicked will perish "because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."

3) Christian Living Is Based on Knowledge of the Truth

4) The Body of Christ Is Built with Truth in Love - Colossians 1:28: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." May God make us passionate for him and for truth..

February 15, 2024 - Believe Rejoice and Obey

Anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Ephesians 5:14)

The command of God, "Rise from the dead!" carries in it the power we need to obey it. We do not obey it by creating that life. The call of God creates life. We respond in the power of what the call creates.

How do you obey a command to wake up from sleep? If your house has poisonous carbon monoxide in it, and someone cries out, "Wake up! Save yourself! Get out!" You don't obey by waking yourself up. The loud, powerful command itself wakes you up. You obey by doing what wakeful people do in the face of danger. You get up and leave the house. The call creates the waking. You respond in the power of what the call created — wakefulness.

The way to obey the command to be born is to first experience the divine gift of life and breath, and then to do what living, breathing people do: cry out to God in faith and gratitude and love. When the command of God comes with the creating, converting power of the Holy Spirit, it gives life and we believe, rejoice and obey.

February 16, 2024 - Against Lies

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. John 8:44

Many Christian parents worry about how best to pass faith onto their children. Tragically, statistics suggest they are right to worry. In 2020, the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University found that just 2% of millennials, a generation now well into adulthood, have a biblical worldview. That is the lowest of any generation since surveys on the topic began. According to a Lifeway Research report, two-thirds of those who attend church as teenagers will drop out of church as adults.

A significant aspect of the battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation has to do with ideas. Helping students think correctly about life and the world, God and themselves, would be hard enough if they weren't also facing such strong cultural headwinds. Simply put, many young people today leave the faith because they lack the necessary immunity from the bad ideas of our culture. Christian parents must not only present truth to their children; they must find ways to immunize them against lies.

February 17, 2024 - Feels on the Inside

Claiming to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:22

Child psychiatrist Miriam Grossman, author of Lost in Trans Nation, explains, the number of teen girls "with recent-onset discomfort with their sex is up 4,000 percent. Especially vulnerable are girls with comorbidities, like autism. People who are autistic are three to six times more likely to not identify with their birth sex. Child psychiatrist Dr. Steven Grcevich, the founder and president of a ministry for families with hidden disabilities, called this "the scandal that nobody is talking about … the vulnerability of children with pre-existing medical conditions and autism and other developmental disabilities to this gender ideology."

According to Dr. Grossman, this social contagion has been especially driven by social media, which has become a virtual "assembly line" for challenging girls to question their sense of self. Medical professionals jumped in, resulting in a trail of mutilated bodies, sterilization, bone-density loss, and other irreversible damage done.

Women have been hurt in other ways too. According to the Telegraph, a male student recently attacked female students in a gender-neutral bathroom. In sports such as in jiujitsu and volleyball, girls have been overpowered and injured, not to mention the other issues of fairness of competition, scholarship opportunities, and privacy concerns. All that matters is what an individual feels on the inside.

February 18, 2024 - Consider Him

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (Hebrews 12:3)

One of the most remarkable capacities of the human mind is the capacity to direct its own attention to something it chooses. We can pause and say to our minds, "Think about this, and not that." We can focus our attention on an idea or a picture or a problem or a hope. It is an amazing power.

Have you been neglecting this great weapon in the arsenal of your war against sin? The Bible calls us again and again to use this remarkable gift. Let's take this gift off the shelf, and dust it off, and put it to use.

Paul says in Romans 8:5–6, “Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”.

This is stunning. What you set your mind on determines whether the issue is life or death.

Many of us have become far too passive in our pursuit of change and wholeness and peace. There is a much more aggressive, non-passive approach to change in the New Testament. Namely, set your mind. “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Let us set our eyes and minds on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

February 19, 2024 - Meaning of Grace

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4–6)

The decisive act of God in conversion is that he “made us alive together with Christ” even when “we were dead in our trespasses.” We were dead to God. We were unresponsive; we had no true spiritual taste or interest; we had no spiritual eyes for the beauties of Christ; we were simply dead to all that ultimately matters.

Then God acted — unconditionally — before we could do anything to be fit vessels of his presence. He made us alive. He sovereignly awakened us from the sleep of spiritual death, to see the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). The spiritual senses that were dead, miraculously came to life.

Ephesians 2:4 says that this was an act of “mercy.” God saw us in our deadness and pitied us. God saw the terrible wages of sin leading to eternal death and misery. “God, being rich in mercy . . . made us alive.” The riches of his mercy overflowed to us in our need. What act could be more one-sidedly free and non-negotiated than one person raising another from the dead! This is the meaning of grace.

February 20, 2024 - Eagerly Waiting

Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)

What must you do so that you may know that your sins are taken away by the blood of Christ, and that, when he comes, he will shield you from the wrath of God and bring you into eternal life? The answer is this: Trust Christ in a way that makes you eager for him to come.

The text says he is coming to save those who are “eagerly waiting for him.” So how do you get ready? How do you experience the forgiveness of God in Christ and prepare to meet him? By trusting him in a way that makes you eager for him to come. This eager expectation for Christ is simply a sign that we love him and believe in him authentically.

The faith that really holds on to Christ as Saviour and Lord and Treasure and hope and joy is the faith that makes us long for Christ to come. And that is the faith that saves. I urge you, turn from the world, and from sin. Turn to Christ. Receive him, welcome him, embrace Christ not just as your fire insurance policy, but as your eagerly awaited Treasure and Friend and Lord.

February 21, 2024 - Pride and Arrogance

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. (James 4:13–16)

James is talking about pride and arrogance and how they show up in subtle ways. "You boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil."

When you take three categories of temptation to self-reliance — wisdom, power, and riches — they form a powerful inducement toward the ultimate form of pride; namely, atheism. The safest way for us to stay supreme in our own estimation is to deny anything above us.

This is why the proud preoccupy themselves with looking down on others. C.S. Lewis said, "A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you".

February 22, 2024 - Rendering Service

Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. (Ephesians 6:7–8)

Consider these five things from Ephesians 6:7–8 in connection to your job.

1) A call to radically Lord-centred living. This is astonishing compared to the way we usually live. Paul says that all our work should be done as work for Christ, not for any human supervisor. With good will render service "as to the Lord and not to man."

2) A call to be a good person. Lord-centred living means being a good person and doing good things.

3) Power to do a good job for inconsiderate earthly employers. Paul's aim is to empower Christians, with Lord-centred motives, to go on doing good for supervisors who are not considerate.

4) Encouragement that nothing good is done in vain. Every little thing you do that is good is seen and valued and rewarded by the Lord.

5) Encouragement that insignificant status on earth is no hindrance to great reward in heaven. Your supervisor may think you are a nobody — a mere bondservant, so to speak. Or he may not even know you exist. That doesn't matter. The Lord knows you exist. And in the end no faithful service will be in vain.

February 23, 2024 - The Battle to Remind

"This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end." (Lamentations 3:21–22)

One of the great enemies of hope is forgetting God's promises. Reminding is a great ministry. Peter and Paul both said that they wrote letters for this reason (2 Peter 1:13; Romans 15:15).

The main Helper in reminding us what we need to know is the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). But that doesn't mean you should be passive. The mind has this great power: It can talk to itself by way of reminder. If we don't "call to mind" what God has said about himself and about us, we languish.

God is the God of the impossible. Reasoning your way out of an impossible situation is not as effective as reminding yourself that God does impossible things. Without reminding ourselves of the greatness and grace and power and wisdom of God, we sink into brutish pessimism. “I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you” (Psalm 73:22).

The great turn from despair to hope in Psalm 77 comes with these words: “I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds” (Psalm 77:11–12). This is the great battle of our lives. The battle to remind!

February 24, 2024 - Our Joy is Secure

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” (Matthew 5:11)

“Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

Jesus revealed a secret that protects our happiness from the threat of suffering and the threat of success. That secret is this: Great is your reward in heaven. And the sum of that reward is enjoying the fullness of the glory of Jesus Christ (John 17:24).

Jesus protects our happiness from suffering. Our great reward in heaven rescues our joy from the threat of persecution and reviling.

He also protects our joy from success. The disciples were tempted to put their joy in ministry success. “Even the demons are subject to us in your name!” (Luke 10:17). But that would have severed their joy from its only sure anchor.

Jesus protects their joy from the threat of success by promising the far greater reward of heaven. Your inheritance is infinite, eternal, sure. Our joy is safe. Neither suffering nor success can destroy its anchor. Great is your reward in heaven. Your name is written there. It is secure.

February 25, 2024 - Education Championed

Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and walk along the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:7

The rising generation is our most educated generation if you compare the number of millennials who completed bachelor’s degrees with that of previous generations. However, as British commentator Peter Hitchens recently pointed out, being “schooled” isn’t the same as being “educated.”

What he said about British schools could be applied to many western ones: “Our education system teaches the young what to think, not how to think. And if you ever wonder why so many things don’t work properly any more, or why you can’t get any sense out of so many organisations, this is one of the main reasons.”

When students are indoctrinated in critical theories regarding gender and race, when pushback is considered “harassment” or “racism,” and when the main point is to sexualize kids, it’s not education. As Steven Garber has written, “Education, always and everywhere, is about the deepest questions of life and the world.” Education wrestles with the hard questions, training students to think critically and creatively. Christians have always championed education. We can today too.

February 26, 2024 - A Portion of Their Courage

Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. Hebrews 13:38

A recent article in Christianity Today states, “Overall, 365 million Christians live in nations with high levels of persecution or discrimination.” That’s more people than live in the United States.

The most troubling spots tend to be either authoritarian states like Cuba and North Korea, or Muslim-dominated areas like Saudi Arabia. Nigeria accounts for over 75% of world martyrs, with over 4,100 killed between October 2022 and September 2023.

In contrast to a popular Western claim, the growing hostility to faith is not because these precious brothers and sisters are too prudish, too powerful, or too white. It’s because they have embraced the name of the One who suffered on their behalf.

Francis Schaeffer once wrote, “No totalitarian authority nor authoritarian state can tolerate those who have an absolute by which to judge that state and its actions.” In any place where religion, ideology, or state demands absolute loyalty, Christians will be seen as a problem. Please pray for those suffering and pray that we would be given a portion of their courage.

February 27, 2024 - House Divided

Woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.” 1 Corinthians 11:11

Marriage and family are chief among what conservative writers have long called society’s “mediating institutions,” those layers between individuals and the state that provide security, opportunity, and meaning without the government’s intervention. As entering marriages and creating families becomes rarer, it’s little wonder so many who historically would have looked for protection and provision in the home are now instead looking to the state.

The wedges that radical feminism, the sexual revolution, and the breakdown of the family have driven between the sexes are likely the main reason for this growing political divide. Women and men were created for one another, not just to build families but to build societies. Since each sex is indispensable, both, in their own ways, are lost when isolated.

Instead of pointing fingers at one another as Adam and Eve did after the fall, we should take this emerging political divide as clear evidence that without our oldest and most important mediating institution—the family, society unravels. There’s no way forward if men and women remain at such loggerheads, not only does dating become a nightmare, but the future is at risk. After all, the government cannot birth new citizens, voters, and taxpayers. Men and women stand or fall together. A nation in which the sexes are at war is a house divided against itself at the most fundamental level. Such a house cannot stand.

February 28, 2024 - Seek the Good

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

The corruption and dishonest elections we will likely witness around the globe, do not prove that democracy is a bad idea. Rather, they are proof of a biblical description of the human condition. Humans are fallen and are subject to sin’s corruption.

We may be concerned about whether humans can survive democracy. A better question is whether democracy can survive fallen humanity. Alexis de Tocqueville's observed: That just as Christianity provides the philosophical and moral grounding for democracy, Christian morality is the only system that can keep democracy from devolving into tyranny.

A democracy can only be sustained if informed citizens operate within a moral framework. This, in turn, requires an understanding of the world as it actually is, especially what it means to be human. Elected representatives who can't distinguish good from evil, or "man" from "woman" can hardly be expected to enact policies that allow men and women to seek the good. As John Adams, the second U.S. president, wrote, "our constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

God has placed us in this moment, a moment that is really a historical anomaly. Among other things, this implies we have a responsibility to be the moral people upon which democracy depends. Thus, we must commit again to loving one another, to governing our tempers, ambitions, greed, and tendency toward selfishness, and to never compromising on the truth of what it means to be human or what it means to seek the good.

February 29, 2024 - Sit with Me

"The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Revelation 3:21)

What does Jesus mean when he says this to the church in Laodicea? Sit with Jesus on his throne?

This is a promise to everyone who conquers, that is, who presses on in faith to the end (1 John 5:4), in spite of every threatening pain and luring, sinful pleasure. So if you are a true believer in Jesus, you will sit on the throne of the Son of God who sits on the throne of God the Father.

The "throne of God" signifies the right and authority to rule the universe. That's where Jesus sits. "He must reign," Paul said, "until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:25). So when Jesus says, "I will grant him to sit with me on my throne," he promises us a share in the rule of all things.

Paul has this in mind in Ephesians 1:22–23 "He put all things under [Christ's] feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

We, the church, are "the fullness of him who fills all." What does that mean? The universe will be filled with the glory of the Lord (Numbers 14:21). And one dimension of that glory will be the complete and unopposed extension of his rule everywhere. So let us sit with Jesus.