TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

May 2024

May 1, 2024 -Ceased from Sin

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. (1 Peter 4:1)

When we arm ourselves with the thought that Christ suffered for us, we realize that we died with him. *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).* When we die with him, we cease to sin.

It's just like Romans 6. *"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. . . . So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:6–7, 11).*

Peter says, "Arm yourselves with this thought!" Paul says, "Consider yourselves dead!" The weapon for our warfare against sin is this thought — this consideration. When my Lord suffered and died to free me from sin, I died to sin!

The Son of God suffered to deliver us from sinning. He did not suffered to make us miserable. Therefore, what he died to purchase must be more wonderful than the pleasures of sin. Since we trust him, our susceptibility to allurements has shrivelled up and died and we ceased from sin

May 2, 2024 - He Took Our Shame

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed or embarrassed. Genesis 2:25

Shame is a reality after the fall, a sign that something about us is not the way it's supposed to be. Shame entered the world because of sin. Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed. After they broke God's commandment by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they covered their nakedness and hid from God, ashamed.

The cultural push to get rid of shame altogether is deeply problematic. The solution to our shame is not to become shameless, nor to redefine and normalize those things that bring shame as if they are, instead, a source of pride. For one thing, as we now are seeing, the normalization of what is shameful leads to the normalization of even worse things, such as the sexualization of children.

None of our human attempts to deny, disregard, or redefine what is shameful will work. In fact, not one of our attempts can make things even better. Shamelessness brings more problems. Immodesty makes us more vulnerable to the brokenness of ourselves and others. Covering or eliminating the consequences of our bad behaviours leads only to riskier behaviour.

The only antidote for our shame is found in the shame Christ endured on our behalf that first Good Friday. On the cross, Jesus not only bore our guilt; He also took on our shame.

May 3, 2024 - Effects of Ignorance

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:3)

We should be amazed at the power that the Bible attributes to knowledge. Literally, all the power available from God to live and be godly comes through knowledge! What a premium we should put on doctrine and instruction in the Scriptures! Life and godliness are at stake.

Not that knowing guarantees godliness. It doesn't. But it seems that ignorance guarantees ungodliness. Because, Peter says, the divine power that leads to godliness is given through the knowledge of God. Here are three implications, and a warning.

1. Beware of wasting your time on theological foam and suds. Read rich doctrinal books about "the one who called you to his glory and excellence."

2. Ponder, slow down. Take time to think about what the Bible means when you read it. Ask questions. Keep a journal. Let yourself be humbly troubled by puzzling things. The deepest insights come from trying to see the unifying root of two apparently antagonistic branches on the tree of truth.

3. Be a part of a small group discussion that cares passionately about the truth. Not a group that just likes to talk and raise problems. But a group that believes there are biblical answers to biblical problems, and they can be found.

Warning: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6)."They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). So beware of the deadly effects of ignorance.

May 4, 2024 - What is Good

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:21

Government Should Promote What's Good for Society, Not Just What's Fair. A recent Vox article snarkily titled, "Want Financial Security in America? Better Get Married" complained that, "Couples get hundreds of legal and economic privileges single people don't. If that feels unfair, it's because it is."

Though perhaps a compelling claim during tax season, this view mistakenly misses that tax breaks are to incentivize what's good for society. And nothing is better for society, or saves the government more money, than flourishing marriages and families. Without them, societies do not have a stable future.

Laws should reflect this reality. That's why even tax laws should reflect a value for life, marriage, and families. Also, they should limit the government in every way that is possible. When the Church cares for those in broken family situations, assisting single parents and widows who need long-term, stable support, then the government can stay out of that lane. In other words, laws are not best understood by what seems "fair," but by what is good.

May 5, 20224- The Fear of Man

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 1:8)

A great obstacle to serving the Lord, especially among the young, is the fear of rejection and opposition. All kinds of thoughts enter the mind about how some people might not like the way we act or speak. People might disagree or be offended. I might make a mistake and get criticized.

The fear of man is a great hindrance to ministry. So God says, Don't fear, because I will be with you and I will deliver you. God's presence and approval is more valuable than all the accolades of men. And God says that, in and through all your troubles, I will deliver you. You will triumph in the end. You will be more than a conqueror.

And the same thing is promised to all of us in Christ Jesus today:

"[God] has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5–6)

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

So God said to young Jeremiah, and God says to young people today whom he is calling to serve him — and to the rest of us — "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'" — or I'm too old, or I'm too anything (Jeremiah 1:7). Why? Because your life is rooted in the unshakable, sovereign purposes of God. You have been chosen and consecrated and formed and appointed for a great purpose. So don't be held back by the fear of man.

May 6, 2024 - Never Hunger or Thirst

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

This text points to the fact that believing in Jesus is a feeding and drinking from all that Jesus is. It goes so far as to say that our soul-thirst is satisfied with Jesus, so that we don't thirst anymore. He is the end of our quest for satisfaction. There is nothing beyond, and nothing better.

When we trust Jesus the way John intends for us to, the presence and promise of Jesus is so satisfying that we are not dominated by the alluring pleasures of sin (see Romans 6:14). This accounts for why such faith in Jesus nullifies the power of sin and enables obedience.

John 4:14 points in the same direction: "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Saving faith is spoken of here as a drinking of water that satisfies the deepest longings of the soul. And the satisfaction becomes productive, like a well overflowing.

It's the same in John 7:37–38: "Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."'"

Through faith, Christ becomes in us an inexhaustible fountain of satisfying life that lasts forever and leads us to heaven, and on the way sets us free from the sinful illusions of other satisfactions. This he does by sending us his Spirit (John 7:38–39).

May 7, 2024 - Bears All Things

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7

We are not only commanded to love our neighbour, but first we are commanded to love God. St. Augustine talked about the importance of properly ordered loves. If we try to love our neighbours first, before loving God, we won't successfully love either. In our efforts to love our neighbours, Christians must first love God. We know what love is because He first loved us, sending Jesus to rescue us from our self-imposed delusions, lies, and rebellions. We must never become so concerned with pleasing our neighbours that we fail to love Christ.

True love is, ultimately, rooted in Christ, who loved us too much to affirm our sin, rebellion, and brokenness. His love is both the example and the source of the love the world needs most right now, the kind which "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

May 8, 2024 - How Sweet are Your Words

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103)

Never reduce Christianity to a matter of demands and resolutions and willpower. It is a matter of what we love, what we delight in, what tastes good to us.

When Jesus came into the world, humanity was split according to what they loved. “The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light” (John 3:19). The righteous and the wicked are separated by what they delight in — the revelation of God in Jesus, or the way of the world.

So someone may ask: How can I come to delight in the word of God? My answer is twofold:

1) pray for new tastebuds on the tongue of your heart;
2) meditate on the staggering promises of God to his people.

The same psalmist who said, “How sweet are your words to my taste” (Psalm 119:103), said earlier, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18). He prayed this, because to have spiritual eyes to see glory, or to have holy tastebuds on the tongue of the heart, is a gift of God. No one naturally hungers for, and delights in, God and his wisdom. That river of reality is the word of God, and all the great saints have been made great by it.

May 9, 2024 - 10 Results of the Resurrection

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. (1 Corinthians 15:17)

Here are ten amazing things we owe to the resurrection of Jesus:

1) A Saviour who can never die again. “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again” (Romans 6:9).

2) Repentance.

3) New birth.

4) Forgiveness of sin.

5) The Holy Spirit.

6) No condemnation for the elect.

7) Jesus’s personal fellowship and protection. “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

8) Proof of coming judgment.

9) Salvation from the future wrath of God.

10) Our own resurrection from the dead. “[We know] that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence” (2 Corinthians 4:14; Romans 6:4; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:20). May you be blessed pondering these 10 results of the resurrection.

May 10, 2024 - The Lord Stood By Me

At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:16–18)

Paul is in custody in Rome. So far as we know, he was never released. His last letter comes to an end like this. He is deserted: "no one came to stand by me." He is an old man. A loyal servant. In a foreign city, far from home. Surrounded by enemies. In danger of death. Why? Answer: So he could write this precious sentence for our discouraged, or fearful, or lonely souls: "But the Lord stood by me!"

How we should love those words! When you are deserted by close friends, do you cry out against God? Are the people in your life, then, really your god? Or do you take courage in this magnificent truth: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20) — no matter who deserts you? Do you strengthen your heart with this wonderful oath: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)? Then let us say, "The Lord stood by me!"

May 11, 2024 - Faith in Christ

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

What is the most Dangerous Idea in Human History? Recently, a TV host asked his audience to name the most dangerous idea in human history. One of his guests replied, "the belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and rose from the dead." That guest was Peter Hitchens, brother of the late New Atheist writer Christopher Hitchens.

Peter Hitchens, however, is a devout Christian. These ideas of Jesus, he said, alters the whole of human behaviour and all our responsibilities. It turns the universe from meaningless chaos into a designed place in which there is justice and there is hope. And therefore, we all have a duty to discover the nature of that justice and work towards that hope. ... It is incredibly dangerous, which is why so many people turn against it.

He's right. Faith in Christ is personal, but not private. If Jesus is who He said He was, the world is a completely different place, and the implications for humanity are enormous.

May 12, 2024 - Give Us All Things

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

God strips every pain of its destructive power. There is so much pain, so many setbacks and discouragements, so many controversies and pressures. Where would we turn, if we did not believe that almighty God is taking every setback and every discouragement and every controversy and every pressure and every pain, and stripping it of its destructive power, and making it work for the enlargement of our joy in God.

Listen to Paul's astonishing words in 1 Corinthians 3:21–23, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." God reigns so supremely on behalf of his elect that everything which faces us in a lifetime of

obedience and ministry will be subdued by the mighty hand of God and made the servant of our holiness and our everlasting joy in God.

If God is for us, and if God is God, then it is true that nothing can succeed against us. This promise of God's grace is simply overwhelming. But all-important is the foundation: the logic of heaven. Here is a place to stand against all obstacles. God did not spare his own Son! Therefore, how much more will he not spare any effort to give us all that Christ died to purchase — all things, all good, and all bad working for our good! It is as sure as the certainty that he loved his Son!

May 13, 2024 - The Lord Will Sustain You

[The Lord] will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:8–9)

What are you depending on to ensure that your faith will last until Jesus comes?

The question is not, Do you believe in eternal security? The question is, How are we kept secure?

Does the perseverance of our faith rest decisively on the reliability of our own resolve? Or does it rest decisively on the work of God to "keep us trusting"?

It is a great and wonderful truth of Scripture that God is faithful and will keep forever those whom he has called. Our confidence that we are eternally secure is a confidence that God will do whatever is necessary to "keep us trusting!"

The certainty of eternity is no greater than the certainty God will keep us trusting now. But that certainty is very great for all whom God has called.

There are many passages that put the call of God and the keeping of God together in this way. Here is another one: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24).

The "faithfulness" of God guarantees that he will keep safe forever all whom he has called.

May 14, 2024 - Two Deep Needs

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:1)

We as a church are "in" a Father and "in" a Lord. What does that mean? The word "Father" implies primarily care and sustaining and protection and provision and discipline. So, to be "in" the Father would mean mainly to be in the care and under the protection of God as our heavenly Father.

The other designation is Lord: We are in the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Lord" implies primarily authority and leadership and ownership. So, to be "in" the Lord means mainly to be in the charge, under the authority, and in the possession of Jesus as our supreme Lord.

So, Paul greets the Thessalonian church in such a way as to remind them that they are a family (in the care of a Father) and that they are servants (in the charge of a Lord). These two descriptions of God as Father and Lord, and thus of the church as family and servants, correspond to two of our deepest needs.

Every single one of us has a need for rescue and help, on the one hand, and the need for purpose and meaning, on the other. We want a merciful Father to be our Protector, and we want an omnipotent Lord to be our Champion and our Commander and our Leader in some great cause.

May 15, 2024 - Children Not Social Experiments

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or have no compassion for the child of her womb? Isaiah 49:15

A 50-year-old man who identifies as a woman was able to "breastfeed" his grandchild after taking a series of experimental hormones. The researchers who made this possible proudly announced that this unidentified man was able to have this "experience" without any detrimental side effects to himself, as if that's what breastfeeding is about, the experience of the adult.

Not only has the FDA not approved these experimental drugs, it, in fact, strongly warns against them. Most medical professionals warn mothers against even taking cold medicine when breastfeeding and yet, somehow, proponents are praising this experimental use of these drugs as a step forward in "gender-affirming care."

Maya Forstater, the executive director of Sex Matters, rightly criticized, "Men should not be permitted, still less supported, to get between babies and their mothers or to use babies as props to validate their beliefs that they are women." Children should never be social experiments to fulfill adult fantasies.

May 16, 2024 - All Things For Good

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

If you live inside this massive promise, your life is more solid and stable than Mount Everest. Nothing can blow you over when you are inside the walls of Romans 8:28. Outside Romans 8:28, all is confusion and anxiety and fear and uncertainty. Outside this promise of God's all-encompassing grace, there are straw houses of drugs and pornography and dozens of futile diversions. There are slat walls and tin roofs of fragile investment strategies and fleeting insurance coverage and trivial retirement plans. There are cardboard fortifications of deadbolt locks and alarm systems and antiballistic missiles. Outside are a thousand substitutes for Romans 8:28.

Once you walk through the door of love into the massive, unshakable structure of Romans 8:28, everything changes. There come into your life stability and depth and freedom. You simply can't be blown over anymore. The confidence that a sovereign God governs for your good all the pain and all the pleasure that you will ever experience is an incomparable refuge and security and hope and power in your life.

When God's people really live by the grace of Romans 8:28 — from measles to the mortuary — they are the freest and strongest and most generous people in the world. Their light shines and people give glory to their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

May 17, 2024 - Fellow Jesus to Victory

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. (Romans 7:19)

Christians do not live only in defeat. But neither do we live only in perfect victory over sin. And in those times when we fail to triumph over sin, Romans 7:13–25 shows us the normal way a healthy Christian should respond.

We should say:

1. I love the law of God. (verse 22)
2. I hate what I just did. (verse 15)
3. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (verse 24)
4. Thanks be to God! The victory will come through Jesus Christ my Lord. (verse 25)

In other words, no Christian wants to live in defeat. No Christian settles for living in defeat. But if we are defeated for a time, we shouldn't lie about it. No hypocrisy. No posing. No boasted perfectionism. No churchy, pasted smiles or superficiality.

God save us from blindness to our own failures and the consequent quickness to judge others. God, help us to feel worse about our own shortfalls than the failure of others. God, give us the honesty and candour and humility of the apostle Paul and the strength to follow Jesus to Victory.

May 18, 2024 - Reconcile All Things to Himself

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:19-20

It's tempting to see the biblical story of creation as God's Plan A, something discarded on account of our sin. In this view, Christ's work to redeem the world and the work of the Church is just the backup plan. In this view, the Christian life is often reduced to personal salvation, and the world around us to a kind of ticking time bomb waiting to be destroyed. This, however, is not consistent with the deep hope that the Gospel offers.

God's purposes have not changed since creation, the goal of every Christian is not a departure to an otherworldly 'heaven' somewhere in the clouds but a 'coming down' of heaven to the earth ... and the renewal of all creation.

As the biblical story leaves the Old Testament and enters the New, the purposes of God's creation project are made manifest in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What God began in the Garden of Eden in Genesis in God's perfect providence had always been intended to be filled by Jesus the true Gardener in the garden of Easter.

From Genesis to Revelation, God's goals for creation have been the same: that His world and especially His image bearers would be in unbroken fellowship with Him. The redemption of the world through Christ and His Church isn't a new idea. It's simply the fulfillment of God's original plan. God's redeeming work does not scrap creation but restores and renews it.

May 19, 2024 - God Gave the Increase

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:6

Our culture has problems because it's based on man's sinful nature, and we know that rebellion against God in any area of life and thought never works. When men rebel against God, they're going to have problems.

They're going to fail. And what we're witnessing around us is a progressing systemic failure in our culture. For the Christian, the alternative to allowing culture to fail is to reconstruct it. It's to rebuild failing ideas, practices, and institutions on a more solid foundation. It's to rebuild them on the Word of God.

It begins with us. It begins with rebuilding our thinking and our approach to our responsibility to God, then progressing outwardly to our families and our various spheres of influence, to institutions, and to our communities. It is faithfulness to God. All of Scripture is really about reconstruction because Scripture is about an applied worldview.

Scripture begins with creation, and it ends with a picture of the eternal kingdom, so Scripture gives us a history of God calling man back to Himself and His perspective—on how man is living in the context in which God has placed him. Let's work together and watch God give the increase.

May 20, 2024 - Remember Jesus Two Ways

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel. (2 Timothy 2:8)

Paul mentions two specific ways to remember Jesus: Remember him as risen from the dead. And remember him as the offspring of David. Why these two things about Jesus?

Because if he is risen from the dead he is alive and triumphant over death — including our death! Which means that no matter how serious the suffering becomes, the worst that it can do on this earth is kill you. And Jesus has taken the sting out of that enemy. He is alive. And you will be alive.

The resurrection of Jesus was not a random resurrection. It was the resurrection of the son of David. Every Jewish person knew what that meant. That meant that Jesus is the Messiah (John 7:42). And that meant that this resurrection was the resurrection of an everlasting King. Listen to the words of the angel to Mary, Jesus's mother:

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31–33)

So, remember Jesus, the one you serve, and the one for whom you suffer. He is not just alive from the dead, but he is alive as a King who will reign forever. No matter what they do to you, you do not need to be afraid. You will live again. And you will reign with him.

May 21, 2024 - Pray for Your Enemy

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

Prayer for your enemies is one of the deepest forms of love, because it means that you have to really want that something good happen to them. You might do nice things for your enemies without any genuine desire that things go well with them. But prayer for them is in the presence of God who knows your heart, and prayer is interceding with God on their behalf.

It may be for their conversion. It may be for their repentance. It may be that they would be awakened to the enmity in their hearts. It may be that they will be stopped in their downward spiral of sin, even if it takes disease or calamity to do it. But the prayer Jesus has in mind here is always for their good.

This is what Jesus did as he hung on the cross: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:34) And it's what Stephen did as he was being stoned: Falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (Acts 7:60)

Our hearts should desire their salvation and desire their presence in heaven with us and desire their eternal happiness. May God give us grace to pray like the apostle Paul for the Jewish people, many of whom made life very hard for Paul: My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1)

May 22, 2024 - Make Satan Know His Defeat

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

The more real Satan appears in our day — the more obviously active — the more precious the victory of Christ will become to those who trust him. The New Testament teaches that when Christ died and rose again, Satan was decisively defeated. A time of limited freedom is granted to him, but his power against God's people is broken and his destruction is sure.

- "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)
- "[Christ] himself likewise partook of the same things [flesh and blood], that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14)
- "[God] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." (Colossians 2:15)

The decisive blow was struck at Calvary. And one day, when Satan's time of limited freedom is over, Revelation 20:10 says, "The devil . . . [will be] thrown into the lake of fire . . . and will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!" He has been defeated, and we have been given victory. Our task now is to live in that victory and make Satan know his defeat.

May 23, 2024 - Talk to God

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. (Psalm 23:4)

The form of the 23rd psalm is instructive. In Psalm 23:1–3 David refers to God as "he": The Lord is my shepherd . . . he makes me lie down . . . he leads me . . . he restores my soul.

Then in verses 4 and 5 David refers to God as "you": I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me. You anoint my head with oil.

Then in verse 6 he switches back: I shall dwell in the house of the Lord. The lesson we can learn from this form is that it is good not to talk very long about God without talking to God.

Every Christian is at least an amateur theologian — that is, a person who tries to understand the character and ways of God and then put that into words. If we aren't little theologians, then we won't ever say anything to each other, or to God, about God, and will be of very little real help to each other's faith.

But what I have learned from David in Psalm 23 and other psalms is that I should interweave my theology with prayer. I should frequently interrupt my talking about God by talking to God. Not far behind the

theological sentence, “God is generous,” should come the prayerful sentence, “Thank you, God, for your generosity.” On the heels of, “God is glorious,” should come, “I adore your glory.” Let’s enjoy talking to God.

May 24, 2024 - What Happens When We Get Saved?

In Relation to God the Father: 1. We have access to God's grace. 2. We are adopted into the family of God as God's sons. 3. We have an inheritance. 4. We are elected (chosen), (only those IN Christ). 5. We become a child of God. 6. We get Heavenly citizenship. 7. We become an heir of God. 8. We become a new creature. 9. We become a servant of God. 10. We become a priest of God. 11. We are reconciled to God.12. We are Sanctified.

In Relation to God the Son: 13. We are accepted in the beloved. 14. We are baptized into Christ's body. 15. We are a love gift to the Son. 16. We are buried with Christ. 17. We are indwelt by Christ. 18. We possess eternal life. 19. We are saved by Christ. 20. We have peace with God.21. We become a friend of God. 22. We have our name recorded in the book of life in heaven. 23. We are seated with Christ in heavenly places. 24. We receive a blessed hope. 25. We come in fellowship with the Trinity. 26. We have a mansion prepared in glory.

In Relation to God the Holy Spirit: 27. We are born again. 28. We are anointed by the Holy Spirit. 29. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit 30. Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. 31. We are given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. 32. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

In Relation to the Recipient: 33. We are forgiven. 34. We are justified. 35. We are redeemed.36. We have an advocate 37. We have the possibility of getting victory over sin. 38. We become an ambassador for Christ.

May 25, 2024 - No Pain No Gain

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

I have never heard anyone say, “The really deep lessons of my life have come through times of ease and comfort.” But I have heard strong saints say, “Every significant advance I have ever made in grasping the depths of God’s love and growing deep with him, has come through suffering.”

This is a sobering biblical truth. For example: “For [Christ’s] sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8). Paraphrase: No pain, no gain.

Here’s another example: “Although he was a son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). The same book said he never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

So learning obedience does not mean switching from disobedience to obedience. It means growing deeper and deeper with God in the experience of obedience. It means experiencing depths of yieldedness to God that would not have been otherwise attained. This is what came through suffering.

We are strange creatures indeed. If we have health and peace and time to love, it can become a thin and hasty thing. But if we are dying, love becomes a deep, slow river of inexpressible joy, and we can scarcely endure to give it up. So let us endure the pain to get the gain.

May 26, 2024 - You Cannot Lose

“You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” (Matthew 27:65)

When Jesus was dead and buried, with a big stone rolled against the tomb, the Pharisees came to Pilate and asked for permission to seal the stone and guard the tomb. They gave it their best shot — in vain.

It was hopeless then, it is hopeless today, and it will always be hopeless. Try as they may, people can't keep Jesus down. They can't keep him buried. It's not hard to figure out: He can break out because he wasn't forced in. He let himself be libelled and harassed and blackballed and scorned and shoved around and killed.

I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. (John 10:17–18)

No one can keep him down because no one ever knocked him down. He lay down when he was ready. When it looks like he is buried for good, Jesus is doing something awesome in the dark. "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how" (Mark 4:26–27).

The world thinks Jesus is done for — out of the way — but Jesus is at work. They can't bury him. They can't hold him in. They can't silence him or limit him. Jesus is alive and utterly free to go and come wherever he pleases. Trust him and go with him, no matter what, you cannot lose in the end.

May 27, 2024 - Children Are The Victims

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

For years, activists have claimed that greater social acceptance and affirmation of LGBTQ-identifying individuals would lead to better mental health outcomes. Implicit in the claim is the idea that "widespread prejudice against homosexual people causes them to be unhappy or worse, mentally ill."

However, according to a soon-to-be-published paper by researcher Amy Hamilton, the science does not support this claim. Research from three different continents—Australia, Europe, and the U.S.—reveals that a more accepting social environment does not bring improvement in psychological distress or suicidal behaviour. In fact, it's the opposite. One study found that younger LGBTQ-identifying people raised in more affirming social environments "were worse … than the older cohort."

We've been lied to. The "science" was never settled. In fact, the research trend right now is to show just how ideologically corrupted the medical, educational, psychological, and scientific "experts" have become on questions of sex, gender, and identity and the children are the victims.

May 28, 2024 - Same April 25

Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalm 126:5–6)

There is nothing sad about sowing seed. It takes no more work than reaping. The days can be beautiful. There can be great hope of harvest. Yet the psalm speaks of sowing "in tears." It says that someone "goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing." So, why are they weeping?

I think the reason has nothing to do with sowing. Sowing is simply the work that has to be done, even when there are things in life that make us cry. The crops won't wait while we finish our grief or solve all our problems. If we are going to eat next winter, we must get out in the field and sow the seed, whether we are crying or not.

If you do that, the promise of the psalm is that you will "reap with shouts of joy." You will "come home with shouts of joy, bringing [your] sheaves with [you]." Not because the tears of sowing produce the joy of reaping, but because the sheer sowing produces the reaping, and you need to remember this even when your tears tempt you to give up sowing.

So, go ahead and let the tears flow if they must. But believe — though you do not yet see it or feel it fully — that the simple work of sowing will bring sheaves of harvest and your tears will be turned to joy.

May 29, 2024 - The Claims of Jesus

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me. John 14:6

It's odd how many people these days are coming to appreciate Christianity for everything other than the Lord and Savior at its centre. Even figures who don't exactly believe in Jesus' claim to be God, like psychologist Jordan Peterson, have made careers out of applying the stories and values found in Scripture to people's lives. Peterson has even embarked on a teaching series mining the book of Genesis for psychological insights, of which there are, of course, many.

Quite a few unbelievers have also come to appreciate Christianity's contribution to civilization. Longtime atheists like historian Tom Holland have argued persuasively that the West as we know it, with its values of equality, human rights, and love of neighbour, and even its science and art, is the product of Christian influence.

I'm glad so many people are rediscovering the benefits of having a transcendent anchor as individuals and a society. It's true that secularism lacks an essential "nutrient" for the spirit, and people are right to look to faith as the place where that nutrient exists. But it matters deeply which faith we're talking about, not only because happiness without truth is meaningless, but because this life isn't all that matters. Those interested in finding out why and what comes next must take the claims of Jesus seriously.

May 30, 2024 - Change Hearts and Minds

The Lord can turn the hearts of people as he pleases; their understanding, will, and affections, are in his hands. Proverbs 21:1

The Cass Review, "the most extensive and thorough … evidence-based review of treatment for children experiencing gender distress ever undertaken," landed like a bombshell in the U.K. The report's main conclusion is that science is not settled about "gender-affirming" treatments of minors. In fact, Dr. Cass concluded that "for most young people, a medical pathway will not be the best way to manage their gender-related distress."

As expected, the reaction from LGBTQ advocates was swift and shrill, attempting to discredit The Cass Review. For example, British MP Dawn Butler claimed that Dr. Cass left out 100 studies from the report. It turns out she simply repeated a social media post of a pro-LGBTQ organization without fact-checking the claim or reading the report.

After being corrected by Dr. Cass and others, Butler admitted her mistake and apologized for "inadvertently [misleading]" the House. Good for her. She's given us an example of the power of truth to change hearts and minds.

May 31, 2024 - Tale of Two Politicians

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: But when the wicked rule, the people mourn. Proverbs 29:2

Humza Yousaf resigned as First Minister of Scotland, the second top Scot to do so in just over a year. In each case, these leaders lost their office largely because they were more committed to progressive agenda items than anything related to Scotland's independence or wellbeing.

In his short time in power, Yousaf unwittingly imitated the villain in Braveheart by complaining that Scotland had too many Scots, pushed hard to advance radical elements of gender ideology as Britain and Europe were pulling back, and tried to squash all dissenting voices to his Left-wing agenda.

The tale of these two politicians should serve as a warning. First, even in politics, it's only possible to run against the grain of reality for so long. Eventually, reality wins. Second, we can't always rely on the incompetence of our political leaders. Eventually, they'll stumble, but they can do real harm before they do.