TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

June 2024

June 1, 2024 - Hallowed be Your Name

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" (Matthew 6:9)

Dozens of times Scripture says that God does things "for his name's sake."

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:3)

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

He saved them for his name's sake. (Psalm 106:8)

For my name's sake I defer my anger. (Isaiah 48:9)

Your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. (1 John 2:12)

If you ask what is really moving the heart of God in all those statements (and many like them), the answer is that God delights in having his name known and honoured.

The first and most important prayer that can be prayed is, "Hallowed be your name". It's a petition, a kind of imperative or command. Lord, let it be! Cause it to be. This is my request, my prayer. I am urging you to this: Cause people to hallow your name. Cause me to hallow your name!

God loves to have more and more people "hallow" his name. That's why his Son teaches Christians to pray for it. In fact, Jesus makes it the very first and paramount prayer. Because this is the first and great passion of the Father.

June 2, 2024 - The Christian Church

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

Imagine a world simultaneously obsessed with sex and opposed to having children, in which girls are forced to marry before puberty and abortion is an acceptable means of ending embarrassing pregnancies, but often results in the sterilization or death of the mother. In this world, infanticide, especially of babies born female or disabled, is both legal and common, and those lucky enough to be rescued are forced into prostitution. And due to this legalized "gendercide," there are about 131 and 140 men for every 100 women. Imagine how brutal that world would be for women and children. This was the Roman Empire.

Now imagine that an unpopular minority religious group emerges. Its adherents see women as spiritual and moral equals and treat them with respect and honour. Young girls are cared for, not forced to marry, and only do so when of age. This group not only rescues victims of attempted infanticide but adopts them, raising them in their own homes. In this group, extra-marital sex is prohibited, for husbands and not just wives, as is divorce, abortion, and infanticide. Widows with nowhere else to go are also taken in and cared for. Imagine how popular this group would be, especially with women and children. This was the early Christian Church.

June 3, 2024 - The Giver of Life

For the fountain of life is with You; In Your light we see light. Psalm 36:9

Christianity was a pro-natalist religion in an anti-natalist world. Our culture is not unlike that of the Roman Empire, an era obsessed with sex but indifferent or opposed to children, who are increasingly seen as optional lifestyle accessories to suit the desires of adults. Like the early Christians, our faithfulness requires being counter-cultural in our attitudes about sex and children, an insistence that sex be confined within its God-given scope of monogamous marriage, honouring its God-given purpose, and welcoming all children who result into our families and into the community of faith, including those discarded by pagan parents.

We should do these things because they are right and good, true to who we are. Through this kind of faithfulness, the early Christians ultimately won over a Roman Empire that was hostile to the Gospel. As we face a world that looks more and more like that one, we have much to learn from their example. Let us love life and the Lord the giver of life.

June 4, 2024 - Courage to Endure

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. – Matthew 5:11-12

For the third time, government prosecutors will haul Päivi Räsänen back to court, this time the Finnish Supreme Court. The Finnish parliamentarian faces charges of hate speech for challenging her church's sponsorship of an LGBTQ event in a 2019 tweet and for describing the biblical view of male and female in a 2004 pamphlet.

The importance of this trial is immense. As Räsänen said in a statement with ADF International, "This was not just about my opinions, but about everyone's freedom of expression. I hope that with the ruling of the Supreme Court, others would not have to undergo the same ordeal."

The fundamental freedoms of speech and religion face unprecedented threats across Europe. Recently in Scotland, a new hate crime law threatened anyone who refused to use someone's "preferred pronouns." It was challenged by the courage of another woman, J.K. Rowling.

Räsänen's been acquitted twice but, as ADF international director Paul Coleman observed, her opponents are punishing her with the process. Let's pray for her faith and her courage to endure.

June 5, 20224- We Can do Better

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

According to Britain's The Independent, calls to an anti-slavery hotline grew from just under 10,000 in 2022 to nearly 12,000 last year. Whether the increase in calls reflects an actual increase of slavery in the U.K. or an increase in awareness of the hotline, it's a reminder that an ancient evil is still very much part of the modern world.

Today, slavery can take the form of things like organ harvesting, or even surrogacy-based slavery, when women are warehoused, financially pressured, or otherwise coerced into providing children for paying Western customers.

This booming market, child advocate Katy Faust says, “is the real #HandmaidsTale,” with customers and “providers” willing to go to unconscionable lengths to secure the “product.” With so much money to be made and little to no legal restrictions, women and children are dehumanized and made commodities. Christianity has long fought against such evils. Surely, we can do better!

June 6, 2024 - Overcome Our Fears

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

There’s no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger, true courage is facing danger when you are afraid.” How do we face danger and overcome fear? By fearing God more than anything else. When James Calvert went out as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, the captain of his ship sought to turn him back. “You’ll lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages,” he cried. Calvert only replied, “We died before we came here.” By dying to his own life internally before God, Calvert was prepared to face external dangers courageously.

In today’s industrialised mass culture, we are under great pressure to fit in, to conform, to hand over control of our lives to the large bureaucracies that dominate our social institutions. If we want to be men and women of virtue in an age of faceless bureaucracies, we must begin with the courage to face God—to acknowledge Him as the King of the universe and Lord of our lives. For only when we fear God will we have the power to overcome all our other fears.

June 7, 2024 - The Right Call Say No

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things… And the God of peace will be with you. Phillipians 4: 8-9

In a video for the Identity Project, Dr. Leonard Sax notes that 20 years ago, many young girls had a diary in which to write, privately, about the journey to discover who they are and what they want. That kind of introspection is healthy and helpful. Today, however, too much mental processing is done on TikTok and Instagram. It’s not private but performative. Think of the teenage girl who takes 100 selfies, choosing two or three to offer her social media audience, after carefully touching them up.

That is not healthy. As Dr. Sax put it, “The difference between the diary and social media is the difference between living and performing.” The constant striving for approval, which rarely comes, from a disembodied online crowd also trying to “perform’’ and, at times, hurt others, inflicts long-term damage on the mental and emotional wellbeing of young girls. That’s why, when it comes to teens and social media, the right call is to say “No.”

June 8, 2024 - Be Not Like a Mule

Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. (Psalm 32:9)

Picture God’s people as a farmyard of all sorts of animals. God cares for his animals, he shows them where they need to go, and supplies a barn for their protection. But there is one beast on this animal farm that gives God an awful time, namely, the mule. He’s stupid and he’s stubborn.

Now the way God likes to get his animals into the barn for their food and shelter is by teaching them that they all have a personal name and then calling them by name. “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go” (Psalm 32:8).

But the mule will not respond to that sort of direction. He is without understanding. So God gets in his pick-up truck and goes out in the field, puts the bit and bridle in the mule’s mouth, hitches it to the truck, and drags him stiff-legged and snorting all the way into the barn. That is not the way God wants his animals to come to him for blessing and protection.

One of these days it is going to be too late for that mule. He’s going to get clobbered with hail and struck by lightning, and when he comes running, the barn door is going to be shut. Therefore, don’t be like the mule. Instead, let everyone who is godly come to God in prayer at a time when he may be found (Psalm 32:6).

June 9, 2024 - Mercies for Today’s Troubles

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22–23)

God’s mercies are new every morning because each day only has enough mercy in it for that day. God appoints every day’s troubles. And God appoints every day’s mercies. In the life of his children, they are perfectly appointed. Jesus said, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34). Every day has its own trouble. Every day has its own mercies. Each is new every morning.

But we often tend to despair when we think that we may have to bear tomorrow’s load on today’s resources. God wants us to know: We won’t. Today’s mercies are for today’s troubles. Tomorrow’s mercies are for tomorrow’s troubles.

Sometimes we wonder if we will have the mercy to stand in terrible testing. Yes, we will. Peter says, “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Peter 4:14). When the reviling comes, the Spirit of glory comes. It happened for Stephen as he was being stoned. It will happen for you. When the Spirit and the glory are needed, they will come.

The manna in the wilderness was given one day at a time. There was no storing up. That is the way we must depend on God’s mercy. You do not receive today the strength to bear tomorrow’s burdens. You are given mercies today for today’s troubles.

June 10, 2024 - Children Are a Blessing

Children are a blessing from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! Psalm 127:3-5

Christians believe that children are a gift of God and that, as a recent statement of Evangelicals and Catholics Together put it, “how a society treats children is a vital sign of its health”:

Do we desire them? Welcome them? Do we honour parents and champion their vocations as the primary caregivers, teachers, and mentors of children? Are the basic institutions of our society, including corporations and other places of employment, properly attentive to the care of children and the flourishing of family life? Are government policies oriented to the wellbeing of children? Do our churches support marriage? Are we clear and persistent in our proclamation of the Bible’s sexual norms affirming the fruitfulness of the conjugal union and the joy and responsibilities of family life? These are important questions for anyone who cares about the future as we know that children are a blessing from God.

June 11, 2024 - The Love of God

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. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. (1 John 5:3–4)

Loving God is not just keeping his commandments. It is having a kind of heart for God that means that commandment-keeping is not burdensome. That's what John says, but then he puts that truth in terms of new birth and faith, rather than love.

The new birth overcomes the worldly obstacles to burden-free commandment-keeping, because the new birth gives rise to faith. So, the miracle of new birth creates faith, which embraces all that God is for us in Christ as supremely satisfying, which makes obedience to God more desirable than the temptations of the world. And that is what it means to love God. Faith in Christ is not just assenting to what God is for us, but also embracing all that he is for us in Christ.

There is no contradiction between 1 John 5:3, on the one hand, which says that our love for God enables us to keep his commandments, and verse 4, on the other hand, which says that our faith overcomes the obstacles of the world that keep us from obeying God's commandments. Love for God and Christ is implicit in faith.

Jesus is the greatest person in the universe alongside his Father. Therefore, all he taught is true, and all he promised will stand firm, and all his soul-satisfying greatness will never change as we experience the love of God.

June 12, 2024 - The Beauty of Life

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:14

Last month, medical researchers published a paper analysing data on "permanent contraceptive procedures" among 18- to 30-year-olds.

Since the overturning of Roe v. Wade in the landmark Dobbs case, the number of both men and women aged 18 to 30 who pursue sterilization—of their own accord, for no medically necessary reason—is on the rise. And more women are pursuing these procedures than men. In the month immediately following the Dobbs decision, the number of young women who got tubal ligations jumped by over 20%. Since then, the number of additional women getting tubal ligations each month has almost doubled.

And yet, "sterilization regret" is also on the rise. According to one study, women who undergo tubal ligations before age 30 are eight times more likely to undergo a reversal or pursue in vitro fertilization. The legacy of Roe v. Wade was to reduce sex to entertainment and see children as a burden. To build a better future after Roe, we must help the next generation discover the beauty of life.

June 13, 2024 - Touch Our Hearts

Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valour whose hearts God had touched. (1 Samuel 10:26)

Just think of what is being said in this verse. God touched them. Not a wife. Not a child. Not a parent. Not a counsellor. But God touched them. The One with infinite power in the universe. The One with infinite

authority and infinite wisdom and infinite love and infinite goodness and infinite purity and infinite justice. That One touched their heart.

The touch of God is awesome not just because it is God who touches, but also because it is a touch. It is a real connection. That it involves the heart is awesome. That it involves God is awesome. And that it involves an actual touch is awesome.

The valiant men were not just spoken to. They were not just swayed by a divine influence. They were not just seen and known. God, with infinite condescension, touched their heart. God was that close, and they were not consumed. I love that touch. I want it more and more. For myself and for all of you. I pray that God would touch me anew with his glory and for this glory. I pray that he would touch us all.

Oh, for the touch of God! If it comes with fire, so be it. If it comes with water, so be it. If it comes with wind, let it come, O God. If it comes with thunder and lightning, let us bow before it. O Lord, come. Come that close. Burn and soak and blow and crash. If still and small, come. Come all the way. Touch our hearts.

June 14, 2024 - Time Serves God

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. Ecclesiastes 3:11

In the Bible, we find that not only was every new year a festival, but every new month, and each new month began with a festival. Each of these festivals of time was announced at its beginning by an authority who declared, according to old records, "It is consecrated," meaning that the day was now consecrated.

Why this importance to the calendar? One day, after all, is just like another, but, everywhere in the world, we find new years, new moons, new months, regarded as important. The reasons for this are twofold, and very different. In paganism, days marking divisions of time were very important because these days reflected changes in nature. Pagan religions were forms of nature worship. The Hebrew festivals were not geared to nature but to God. They celebrated time changes in relationship to God. The Passover was their day of salvation. Their thanksgiving celebrated the goodness of God to His people. The new month marked a natural change, but it praised God for His sovereignty, and each new year was numbered in terms of God's creation.

The Christian calendar is dated A.D., Anno Domini, the year of our Lord Jesus Christ. It continues the Biblical tradition in honouring time and observing it, because it holds time to be under God and serving the purposes of God. Time works against the ungodly, against all builders of modern Towers of Babel, because time is totally governed by its Creator, God. God has made time, and it can only serve Him.

June 15, 2024 - Goodness and Fear

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! (Psalm 31:19)

Consider two important truths from this verse.

1. The goodness of the Lord

There is a peculiar goodness of God. That is, there is not only God's general goodness that he shows to all people, making his sun rise on the evil and the good (Matthew 5:45), but also a peculiar goodness, as the psalm says, for "those who fear" him.

This goodness is abundant beyond measure. It is boundless. It lasts forever. It is all-encompassing. There is only goodness for those who fear him. Everything works together for their good (Romans 8:28). Even their pains are filled with profit according to Romans 5:3–5.

2. The fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord is the fear of straying from him. Therefore, it expresses itself in taking refuge in God. That's why two conditions are mentioned — fearing the Lord and taking refuge in him. They seem to be opposites. Fear seems to drive away and taking refuge seems to draw in. But when we see that this fear is a fear of running away — a fear of straying from him — then they work together.

There is a real trembling in the heart of the saints. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). But it is the trembling one feels in the arms of a Father who has just plucked his child from the undertow of the ocean. It is the trembling at the terrible prospect of thinking we don't need a Father. So, cherish the goodness of the Lord. Fear straying from him. Flee from every sin and take refuge in him.

June 16, 2024 - Going to Church

Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

The decreasing quality of mental and emotional health, particularly for young people, across all parts of the West, comes despite the dramatic increase in mental health and counselling resources in recent years. As it turns out, it may be that a real solution was staring us in the face all along: When your grandmother told you to get to church, she was right.

According to a new study published by the Institute for Family Studies, "Evidence suggests that religious involvement may have even more profound health effects for adolescence than for adulthood, with far reaching implications across the life course."

Some of this is due to the secondary effects of a religious life, such as connection to community and the sense of being part of something bigger than just you and the moment. But these beneficial side effects point to something deeper.

Going to church is healthier because it's how we were designed—to live in light of a higher order and in fellowship with others. So let's get going to church.

June 17, 2024 - Protecting Women

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

Recently in VOX, Eric Levitz disparaged a group he called the "reactionary feminists," women such as Mary Harrington and Louise Perry who, though they are feminists, reject most of the sexual revolution. He also condemned the conservative Christians who point to them. According to Levitz, "With religiosity and church attendance in sharp decline, conservatives need non scriptural arguments for traditional social mores. Reactionary feminism offers them precisely this."

Or, perhaps, the ideas of the sexual revolution are just that bad, the consequences that obvious, and the victims that numerous. The promises to liberate women instead brought sexual exploitation and violence. And, as it turned out, men, not women, were the true beneficiaries of "consequence-free" sex.

The sexual revolution may have promised liberation to women, but it only brought abandonment and a different kind of oppression. Feminists are starting to see it, and Christians point it out because they've been the most consistent force protecting women in all human history.

June 18, 2024 - The Reward of Heaven

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11–12)

How do you love the people who kidnap you and then kill you? How can we do this? Where does the power to love like this come from? Just think how astonishing this is when it appears in the real world! Could anything show the truth and power and reality of Christ more than this? I believe Jesus gives us the key to this radical, self-sacrificing love.

In Matthew 5:11–12, he is again talking about being persecuted, just like he was when he said in Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." What is remarkable about these verses is that Jesus says that you are able not only to endure the mistreatment of the enemy, but rejoice in it.

This seems even more beyond our reach than praying for our enemies or doing good to them. If I could do this humanly impossible thing — namely, rejoice in being persecuted — then it would be possible to love my persecutors. If the miracle of joy in the midst of the horror of injustice and pain and loss could happen, then the miracle of love for the perpetrators could happen too.

Jesus gives the key to joy in these verses. He says, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven." Treasuring the reward of heaven empowers you to love your enemy.

June 19, 2024 - Reasons to Be Fearless

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

The reason God wants us not to be afraid concerning money or other things of the world is because that fearlessness — that freedom from anxiety — will magnify five great things about him.

First, not being afraid shows that we treasure God as our Shepherd. Psalm 23:1 applies: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want" — that is, I shall not lack anything I truly need.

Second, not being afraid shows that we treasure God as our Father. We are not only his little flock; we are also his children, and he is our Father.

Third, not being anxious shows that we treasure God as King. He can give us the "kingdom" because he is the King. This adds a tremendous element of power to the one who provides for us. "Shepherd" connotes protection and provision. "Father" connotes love and tenderness and authority and provision and guidance. "King" connotes power and sovereignty and wealth.

Fourth, not being afraid shows how free and generous God is. He is infinitely wealthy and does not need our payments. So, God is generous and free with his bounty.

Finally, not being afraid — not being anxious — shows that we trust that God really wants to do this. It delights him. He is not begrudging. It makes him glad to give us the kingdom.

The point of this verse is that we should treasure God as our Shepherd and Father and King who is generous and happy to give us the kingdom of God — to give us heaven, to give us eternal life and joy, and everything we need to get there.

June 20, 2024 - Seek the City's Welfare

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. . . . But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:4–5, 7)

If that was true for God's exiles in Babylon, it would seem true for Christian exiles in this very "Babylon-like" world. What, then, shall we do? We should do the ordinary things that need to be done: build houses; live in them; plant gardens. This does not contaminate you if you do it all for the real King and not just for eye service as men-pleasers.

Seek the welfare of the place where God has sent you. Think of yourself as sent there by God for his glory. Because you are. Pray to the Lord on behalf of your city. Ask for great and good things to happen for the city. Ask that they happen by God's power and for his glory. Never lose sight of the ultimate good that the city needs a thousand times more than it needs material prosperity. Christians care about all suffering — especially eternal suffering.

But neither God nor his people are indifferent to the health and safety and prosperity and freedom of the city. We all want these things, and Jesus said, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). In fact, the Lord says in Jeremiah that loving your city is a way of loving yourself: "In its welfare you will find your welfare."

June 21, 2024 - Power of Forgiveness

"Your sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:48)

A woman comes to Jesus in a Pharisee's house weeping and washing his feet. No doubt she felt shame as the eyes of Simon communicated to everyone present that this woman was a sinner and that Jesus had no business letting her touch him.

Indeed, she was a sinner. There was a place for true shame. But not for too long. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). And when the guests murmured about this, he strengthened her faith by saying, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:50).

Jesus helped her battle the crippling effects of shame by giving her a promise: "Your sins have been forgiven! Your faith has saved you. Your future will be one of peace." He declared that past pardon would now yield future peace.

The issue for her was faith in God's grace, rooted in the authority of Jesus's forgiving work and freeing word. That is the way every one of us must battle the effects of well-placed shame — not false shame, but shame that we really should feel, but shame that threatens to linger too long and cripple us.

We must battle the unbelief of crippling shame by taking hold of the promises of grace and peace that come through the forgiveness of our shameful acts and then feel the power and new life that this forgiveness gives.

June 22, 2024 - The Patience of Jesus

Formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. . . . I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:13–14, 16)

Paul's conversion was for your sake. Did you hear that? I hope you will hear this very personally. God had you in view when he chose Paul and saved him by sovereign grace just the way he did.

If you believe on Jesus for eternal life — or if you may yet believe on him for eternal life — Paul's conversion is for your sake. The point of his conversion happening the way it did is to make Christ's incredible patience vivid for you.

Remember that Paul's pre-conversion life was a long road to Jesus. "Why are you persecuting me?" Jesus asked on the Damascus road (Acts 9:4). "Your life of unbelief and rebellion is a persecution of me!" And yet Paul tells us in Galatians 1:15 that he had been set apart by God for his apostleship since before he was born. That's amazing. It means that all his life up to the point of his conversion was one long abuse of God, and one long rejection and mockery of Jesus — who had chosen him to be an apostle before he was born. That is why Paul says his conversion is a brilliant demonstration of the patience of Jesus.

June 23, 2024 - To Stand Alone

Therefore take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:13

Last month, a West Virginia school district banned five middle-school female track athletes from participating in future events. They were punished for refusing to compete against males who identified as female at a meet.

The girls sued the school district and, in a moment of sanity, Harrison County Judge Thomas Bedell ordered that they be permitted to participate in track meets while the lawsuit plays out.

Even West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey filed an amicus brief on behalf of the girls. He applauded their courage, saying,

You saw unfairness and you expressed your disappointment and sacrificed your personal performances in a sport that you love; exercised your constitutionally protected freedom of speech and expression.

[These girls] should be commended, not punished. We need to teach [students] that it is noble to stand firm in their beliefs and address their grievances within the protections guaranteed by our constitution.

These girls were willing to stand alone and can teach us all a good lesson.

June 24, 2024 - A Christ Exalting People

"For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself." (1 Samuel 12:22)

The name of God often refers to his reputation, his fame, his renown. This is the way we use the word "name" when we say someone is making a name for himself. Or we sometimes say, that's a "name" brand. We mean a brand with a big reputation.

God chose Israel so that the people would make a reputation for him. God says in Isaiah 43:21 that Israel is "the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise." And when the church came to see itself in the New Testament as the true Israel, Peter described God's purpose for us like this: "You are a chosen race . . . that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

In other words, Israel and the church are chosen by God to make a name for him in the world. This is why we pray first and foremost, "Hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9). This is why we pray, "Lead us in paths of righteousness for your name's sake" (see Psalm 23:3). On this side of the cross, this means being a Christ-dependent, Christ-exalting people.

June 25, 2024 - A Singing God

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mark 14:26)

Can you hear Jesus singing? Did he usually start the song? Or did Peter or James, or maybe Matthew, do it? I can hardly wait to hear Jesus sing! I think the planets would be jolted out of orbit if he lifted his voice to sing in our universe. But we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken; so he can sing.

It could not be otherwise but that Christianity be a singing faith. The founder sang. He learned to sing from his Father. Surely, they have been singing together from all eternity. Would not infinite eternal happiness in the fellowship of the Trinity sing?

The Bible says the aim of our singing is "to raise sounds of joy" (1 Chronicles 15:16). No one in the universe has more joy than God. He is infinitely joyful. He has rejoiced from eternity in the panorama of his own perfections reflected perfectly in the deity of his Son.

God's joy is unimaginably powerful. He is God. When he speaks, galaxies come into being. And when he sings for joy, more energy is released than exists in all the matter and motion of the universe.

If he appointed song for us to release our heart's delight in him, is this not because he also knows the joy of releasing his own heart's delight in his own image in his Son by his Spirit in song? We are a singing people because we are the children of a singing God.

June 26, 2024 - Suppress the Truth

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. Romans 1:18

Activists thought the freedom to marry meant freedom from that quiet internal soul-whisper that something isn't right. They were fooled into believing that contrary voices came from the outside, from Christians and rednecks, when in fact it was baked in at the Creation.

Freedom cannot be found by calling evil good. It is found by living in the truth. So, if true liberation is to be had, it won't be through a church that continues to morally devolve on these issues. It will be through a church committed to the biblical account of reality and the human person.

We must not be distracted by the vitriol and danger of our day. We must bring the gospel to those people who have become casualties of the sexual revolution movement, including Christian parents whose adult children have cut them off. And we must labour as Christian spokespeople, speaking truth to school boards and legislatures, actively speaking boldly in the public sphere, and trusting Christ with the consequences. Should the Lord bless our work, we will see reformation in our churches, revival in our land, and freedom through repentance and faith of those currently captive and enslaved to sin. Even as the whole world rages, our labour is not in vain as we do not suppress the truth.

June 27, 2024 - All Our Righteousness

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed. (Romans 1:16–17)

We need righteousness to be acceptable to God. But we don't have it. What we have is sin. God has what we need and don't deserve — righteousness; and we have what God hates and rejects — sin. What is God's answer to this situation?

His answer is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who died in our place and bore our condemnation. "By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he [God] condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). Jesus flesh bore the condemnation. Whose sins were being condemned? Ours. This is the great exchange. Here it is again in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

God lays our sins on Christ and punishes them in him. And in Christ's obedient death, God fulfills and vindicates his righteousness and credits it to us. Our sin on Christ; his righteousness on us.

We can hardly stress too much that Christ is God's answer to our greatest problem. It is all owing to Christ. You can't love Christ too much. You can't think about him too much, or thank him too much, or depend upon him too much. All our forgiveness, all our justification, all our righteousness is in Christ.

June 28, 2024 - The Day is at Hand

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. (Romans 13:12)

This is a word of hope to suffering Christians. It's a word of hope to Christians who hate their own sin and long to be done with sinning. It's a word of hope to Christians who long for the last enemy Death to be overcome and thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). How is it a word of hope for all these?

"The night" stands for this age of darkness and all its sin and misery and death. Paul says, "The night is far gone." The age of sin and misery and death is almost spent. The day of righteousness and peace and total joy is dawning.

You might say, "2,000 years seems like a long dawn." From one standpoint it is. And we cry, How long, O Lord, how long will you let it go on? But the biblical way to think goes beyond this lament of "How long!" It looks at world history differently.

The key difference is that the "day" — the new age of the Messiah — has really dawned in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the end of this fallen age. The end of this fallen age has, as it were, broken in to this world. Jesus

defeated sin and pain and death and Satan when he died and rose again. The decisive battle of the ages is over. The kingdom has come. Eternal life has come.

And when dawn happens — as it did in the coming of Jesus — no one should doubt the coming of day. The dawn has come. The day is at hand.

June 29, 2024 - And Be Thankful

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Phillipians 2:3

G.K. Chesterton said that gratitude is the queen of the virtues. We should remember the debt we owe to those who sacrificed their lives for the good that we enjoy. And it should encourage us to live for the good of future generations ourselves.

In his classic book The Crisis of Our Age, sociologist Pitirim A. Sorokin described the difference between societies in decline and flourishing societies. A major factor, he said, was if people were living for immediate gratification or ordering their lives around higher ideals that drove them to build for the future.

Out-of-control national and personal debt is evidence we struggle to live for the future. So is the decline of the family. Remembering the sacrifice of others on our behalf can restore our vision. So, take a minute to remember the sacrifice of others for us, including our parents and our Lord Jesus, and be thankful.

June 30, 2024 - Fight for Joy

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

In this life of sin and pain, joy is embattled. Just like faith. And Paul says to Timothy, “Fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). So it is with joy. We must work for it and fight for it. Paul said to the Corinthians, “We work with you for your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24).

How then shall we fight for joy?

1. Realize that authentic joy in God is a gift.
2. Realize that joy must be fought for relentlessly. And don’t be put off by the paradox of these first two pointers!
3. Resolve to attack all known sin in your life, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Learn the secret of gutsy guilt — how to fight like a justified sinner.
5. Realize that the battle is primarily a fight to see — to see God for who he is.
6. Meditate on the word of God day and night.
7. Pray earnestly and continually for open heart-eyes and an inclination for God.
8. Learn to preach to yourself rather than listen to yourself.
9. Spend time with God-saturated people who help you see God and fight the fight.
10. Be patient in the night of God’s seeming absence.

11. Get the rest, exercise, and proper diet that your body was designed by God to have.
12. Make a proper use of God's revelation in nature — take a walk in the woods.
13. Read great books about God and biographies of great saints.
14. Do the hard and loving thing for the sake of others.