TikTok Devotional Series Transcript:

July 2024

July 1, 2024 - A Better Woman

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

Failed promises of increased "freedom" are a common feature of life in the sexual revolution. And it's worth asking what we are supposedly being set free from. Often, the promise is that some new scientific technique will help us to conquer the created, God-given design of our bodies. Rather than conforming our lifestyles to that design, we are promised a new design that has been conformed to whatever lifestyle we choose.

Talk about delaying childbearing comes at an incredibly bad time, given that birth rates are already at historic lows. Even more, this conversation tends to focus exclusively on the desires and goals of adults and never on what's good for children.

Despite what the serpent promised in the Garden, humans are not limitless gods capable of endless reengineering. Modern attempts to deny and transcend the "givens" of our bodies are doomed to fail, and not only because the techniques used often cannot deliver on what is promised. The real problem is that this "tinkering" is based on a dehumanising definition of "freedom" that puts us, and women in particular, at war with the design of our bodies.

Which is why, if we do ever figure out how to stop the biological clock, we'll find we're still following a strict schedule. Only this one will be invented by people convinced they can make a better woman than God can.

July 2, 2024 - Neither Cure Nor Care

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? 1 Corinthians 6:19

A new study published last month found that those who undergo so-called "gender transition" surgery are far more likely to attempt suicide than those who do not: over 12 times more likely, in fact. The data surveys millions of patients over the course of 20 years, from 2003 to 2023.

The data exposes just how evil it is for counsellors and activists to pressure parents into "affirming" their children's dysphoria, especially with the manipulative question, "Would you rather have a live son or a dead daughter?"

And yet, shockingly, the researchers concluded the results "underlined the necessity for comprehensive post-procedure psychiatric support." Really? It doesn't underscore that these surgeries should stop? Or at the very least, that there should be sufficient pre-procedure psychiatric support instead of fast-tracking people down this dangerous line?

This study adds to a growing list of evidence that gender transition interventions, whether social, surgical or chemical, are neither cure nor care for those—especially children—struggling with gender dysphoria.

July 3, 2024 - Run The Race

Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Romans 12:1-3

The 2024 Summer Olympics will be the 100th anniversary of the incredible performance by Eric Liddell, whose story was immortalized in the 1981 movie Chariots of Fire.

A devout Christian and son of Scottish missionaries to China, Liddell was committed to never race on Sundays. However, at those Olympics, his best race—100 meters—was scheduled for a Sunday. He withdrew, to the derision of many Brits. Nonetheless, he quickly pivoted to two other races, taking third in the 200-meter and claiming the gold in the 400-meter.

Despite his athletic success, Liddell returned to China the following year. During World War II, the Japanese placed him in an internment camp, where he faithfully served Christ and others before dying of a brain tumour in 1945.

Liddell's Olympic-time decision and post-Olympic hardship were consistent for a man whose life was lived in faithful service to Christ. God, after all, "made [him] for China," but also "made [him] fast." He ran every race, including the race of life, to "feel God's pleasure."

July 4, 2024 - Our Righteousness

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. (Isaiah 64:6)

It is true that any shortcoming of God's law offends his perfect holiness and makes us liable to judgment, since God cannot look with favour on any sin (Habakkuk 1:13; James 2:10–11).

But what brought a person to ruin in the Old Testament (and it is the same for us today) was not the failure to have the righteousness of sinless perfection. What brought them to ruin was the failure to trust in the merciful promises of God, especially the hope that he would one day provide a Redeemer who would be a perfect righteousness for his people ("The Lord is our righteousness," Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16). The Old Testament saints knew that this is how they were saved, and that this faith was the key to obedience, and that obedience was the evidence of this faith.

It is terribly confusing when people say that the only righteousness that has any value is the imputed righteousness of Christ. To be sure, justification is not grounded on any of our righteousness — even Spirit-given righteousness by faith — but only on the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. But sometimes people are careless and speak disparagingly of all human righteousness, as if there were no such righteousness worked in us that pleased God. This is not helpful.

July 5, 20224- Present and Active

God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Notice that "demonstrates" is present tense and "died" is past tense. The present tense implies that this demonstrating is an ongoing act that keeps happening today. And will keep happening tomorrow. The past tense "died" implies that the death of Christ happened once for all and will not be repeated. "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

I would have expected Paul to say, “God demonstrated (past tense) his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Was not the death of Christ, when it happened, the demonstration of God’s love? And did not that demonstration happen in the past?

I think the clue is given a few verses earlier. Paul has just said that “suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame” (Romans 5:3–5). The goal of everything God takes us through is hope. He wants us to feel unwaveringly hopeful through all tribulations. But how can we?

God’s love has been poured into our hearts. The tense of this verb means that God’s love was poured out in our hearts in the past (at our conversion) and is still present and active.

July 6, 2024 - Forgiveness for Jesus’s Sake

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. (1 John 1:9)

Praying for forgiveness should be based not only on an appeal to God’s mercy, but also on an appeal to his justice in crediting the worth of his Son’s obedience. In the New Testament, the basis of all forgiveness of sins is revealed more clearly than it was in the Old Testament, but the basis, namely, God’s commitment to his name, does not change.

Paul teaches that the death of Christ demonstrated God’s righteousness in passing over sins, and vindicated God’s justice in justifying the ungodly who bank on Jesus and not themselves (Romans 3:25–26).

Christ died once for all to clear the name of God in what looks like a gross miscarriage of justice — the acquittal of guilty sinners simply for Jesus’s sake. But Jesus died in such a way that forgiveness “for Jesus’s sake” is the same as forgiveness “for the sake of God’s name.” There is no miscarriage of justice. God’s name, his righteousness, his justice is vindicated in the very act of providing such a God-honouring sacrifice.

As Jesus said as he faced that last hour, “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name” (John 12:27–28). That is exactly what he did — so that he might be both just and the justifier of those who trust in Jesus.

July 7, 2024 - The Decline of Marriage

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Psalm 127:3

South Korea is considering offering families “baby bonuses”—up to $70,000 per child—to help break its fertility bust. The country’s total fertility rate is just above 0.7, which is the lowest in the world.

In fact, almost every country in the developed world currently has birth rates well below the replacement rate. Many of them have tried and failed at offering tax incentives designed to stop population decline.

That’s because, as family policy scholar Patrick Brown put it, “nations can’t buy their way out of a cultural shift.” This is not, at root, a policy or economic problem. It’s a worldview problem, a cultural shift in views, not only about children and parenting, but more fundamentally, about marriage and sex. Marriage is now viewed as a capstone rather than a foundation for life, and sex is viewed as recreational rather than procreational.

In the words of Patrick Brown, “Anyone concerned about low fertility needs to be concerned, first and foremost, about the decline of marriage.”

July 8, 2024 - Unpopular and Costly

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

Almost 50 years ago, renowned Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn gave a famous commencement address at Harvard University. In it, he argued that Communism was not the only, nor even the primary, problem that should concern the West. Rather, they should be concerned about the rapid moral decline evident in the West.

In Solzhenitsyn's diagnosis, the West had lost "civil courage" and had exchanged eternal truths for what he called "a relentless and superficial legalism." The absence of "courage" played out in three tragic realities: the worship of unbridled freedom, the decadence of art and a corrosive pop culture, and the lack of great statesmen.

This last point especially—the lack of courageous leaders worthy of respect—has only become more evident in the years since Solzhenitsyn delivered his speech. Think of the judges more loyal to political agendas than the law, political leaders embroiled in scandals and affairs, clergy from all sides of Christendom guilty of abusing those they are called to care for or removed from ministry for other moral failings. And more recently, those who've typically been the most trusted—doctors, counsellors, educators—encouraging minors to hate and even mutilate their bodies to advance harmful ideologies.

Solzhenitsyn was right. We are in desperate need of courageous leaders who are willing to pursue integrity and uphold truth even when it is unpopular and costly.

July 9, 2024 - The Work of Men and Women

She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Proverbs 31:27

Recently, in a college student's TikTok video that went viral, a woman discussed the little-known progressive gender studies term, "kinkeeping." According to one professor interviewed by The New York Times, "kinkeeping" involves cultivating a sense of "family solidarity or connectedness" and is primarily performed by women. In the TikTok video, the woman negatively described "kinkeeping" as "the unpaid labour that women are assigned to subconsciously as a gender."

The New York Times article took a more balanced approach. One scholar described the work as "empowering":

Many kinkeepers genuinely appreciate being the person relatives turn to for emotional support and guidance, or the person responsible for carrying the torch from elder generations.

All this hubbub about "kinkeeping" is just needless jargon for what many women do and have been doing as women for others since the beginning. The family is a God-given gift. Stewarding it for the good it brings requires the work of men and women.

July 10, 2024 - God's Love and Power

"Who has given a gift to [God] that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. (Romans 11:35–36)

When it comes to obedience, gratitude is a dangerous motive. It tends to get expressed in debtor's terms. For example, "Look how much God has done for you. Shouldn't you, out of gratitude, do much for him?" Or,

"You owe God everything that you are and have. What have you done for him in return?" I have at least three problems with this kind of motivation.

First, it is impossible to pay God back for all the grace he has given us. We can't even begin to pay him back.

Secondly, even if we succeeded in paying him back for all his grace to us, we would only succeed in turning grace into a business transaction. If we can pay him back, it was not grace.

Thirdly, focusing on gratitude as a motive for obedience tends to overlook the crucial importance of having faith in God's grace. Gratitude looks back to grace received in the past and feels thankful. Faith looks forward to grace promised in the future — whether five minutes from now or five centuries from now — and feels hopeful.

This faith in grace is the motive for obedience that preserves the gracious quality of human obedience. Obedience does not consist in paying God back and thus turning grace into a trade. Obedience comes from trusting in God for more grace and thus magnifying the infinite resources of God's love and power.

July 11, 2024 - Worth Celebrating

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Phillipians 4:8

This summer, Focus on the Family will celebrate the 1000th episode of Adventures in Odyssey.

Odyssey first premiered 37 years ago and continues to enthral children today, bringing biblical truths to life through stories and adventure. As Focus describes Odyssey: "The adventures often start with grandfatherly Mr. Whittaker ("Whit"), who runs an ice cream shop called Whit's End. Young friends from all over town come to Whit for advice."

In an age when children's entertainment centres around messages of following your heart and being true to yourself, this longstanding institution of excellent children's entertainment points children outward and upward to others and to wisdom.

It's more than just entertainment, Odyssey has sparked imaginations, shaped hearts and minds, and entertained families for generations. And it's a great example of Christian art done well. Happy anniversary, Odyssey. 1000 episodes. ... That's something good worth celebrating.

July 12, 2024 - Sources of Joy

In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. (2 Corinthians 7:4)

What is extraordinary about Paul is how unbelievably durable his joy was when things weren't going well. Where did this come from? First of all it was taught by Jesus: "Blessed are you when people hate you. . . . Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven" (Luke 6:22–23). Troubles for Jesus compound your interest in heaven — which lasts a lot longer than earth.

Second, it comes from the Holy Spirit, not our own efforts or imagination or family upbringing. "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy" (Galatians 5:22).

Third, it comes from belonging to the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Fourth, it comes through faith, that is, from believing God. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13).

Fifth, it comes from seeing and knowing Jesus as Lord. “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4).

Sixth, it comes from fellow believers who work hard to help us focus on these sources of joy, rather than deceitful circumstances. “We work with you for your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24).

Seventh, it comes from the sanctifying effects of tribulations. “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Romans 5:3–4). Put to good use these sources of Joy.

July 13, 2024 - Joy from True Knowledge

And all the people went their way . . . to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them. (Nehemiah 8:12)

The only joy that reflects the worth of God and overflows in God-glorifying love is rooted in the true knowledge of God. And to the degree that our knowledge is small or flawed, our joy will be a poor echo of God’s true excellence.

The experience of Israel in this verse is an example of how God-glorifying joy happens in the heart. Ezra had read the word of God to them and the Levites had explained it. And then the people went away “to make great rejoicing.” Their great rejoicing was because they had understood words — the true words of God.

Most of us have tasted this experience of the heart burning with joy when the word of God was opened to us (Luke 24:32). Twice Jesus said that he taught his disciples for the sake of their joy.

- *John 15:11, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”*
- *John 17:13, “These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”*

And what we mainly see in the word is the Lord himself — God himself — offering himself to be known and enjoyed. The point is that if our joy is going to reflect the glory of God, then it must flow from true knowledge of how God is glorious. If we are going to enjoy God, we must know him truly.

July 14, 2024 - You Can’t Out Give God

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only son” (John 3:16)

You may have heard the phrase, “you can’t outgive God.” Generosity is one of God’s defining traits. In the beginning, God gave existence to everything. He didn’t have to, but He did. He gave humanity the creation to steward for His glory and His own image to share. After our first parents fell, He gave them a promise of redemption. Afterwards, He gave Abraham and his descendants a promise, to bless them with a great land, a great name, and a great family. Time and again, the story of Scripture is about the God who gives and gives and gives.

Ultimately, God’s greatest act of generosity was to take on flesh and pay for our sins in the person of Jesus Christ, restoring the world for His original purposes. In Christ, we have received all things, Paul wrote: “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)

One of the ways that human beings best reflect the image of God, and Christians, in particular, best reflect the image of His Son, is through generosity. Generosity and philanthropy have long been a key aspect of Christian society. From research foundations and college scholarships to churches and children's hospitals, the generosity of countless Christians fuels so much good work. This brings much glory to God, and he responds by giving more grace proving that you can't outgive God.

July 15, 2024 - Ironically Alone

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

In a clip recently posted online, Whitney Wolfe Herd, founder of the dating site Bumble, claimed that she wants to "help create more healthy and equitable relationships" through AI.

That sounds good until you hear the rest. Soon, she wants clients to be able to seek advice from your personal "AI dating concierge." And one day, she said, your AI dating concierge could go on dates with other people's AI dating concierges, reducing the number of actual people you would need to meet to find Mr. or Mrs. Right.

So, instead of talking to real friends about your problems or going on dates with real people to build a real relationship, we'll have online avatars do the hard work of dating for us. This kind of disembodied dating might take all the risk out of building relationships, but it would also take the reward (and strip it of reality). In an odd reversal of the goodness God created, this kind of AI dating leaves us ironically alone.

July 16, 2024 - The Eyes of the Lord

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." (2 Chronicles 16:9)

What is God looking for in the world? Assistants? No. The gospel is not a "help wanted" sign. Neither is the call to Christian service. God is not looking for people to work for him. He's the great worker. He's the one with broad, burden-bearing shoulders. He's the strong one. And he is looking for ways to show it. This is what differentiates God from the so-called gods of the world: he works for us. Isaiah 64:4, "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him."

What does God want from us? Not what we might expect. He rebukes Israel for bringing him so many sacrifices. But isn't there something we can give to God that won't belittle him to the status of beneficiary? Yes. Our anxieties. Our needs. Our cries for power to do his will. It's a command: "[Cast] all your anxieties on him" (1 Peter 5:7). God will gladly receive anything from us that shows our dependence and his all-sufficiency.

Workmen get no gifts. They get their due. Their wage. If we would have the gift of justification, we dare not work for it. God is the workman in this affair. And what he gets is the glory of being the benefactor of grace, not the beneficiary of service.

July 17, 2024 - To Love God

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. (Psalm 63:1–2)

Only God will satisfy a heart like David's. And David was a man after God's own heart. That's the way we were created to be. This is the essence of what it means to love God: to be satisfied in him, not just his gifts, but God himself, as the glorious person that he is!

Loving God will include obeying all his commands; it will include believing all his word; it will include thanking him for all his gifts. But all that is overflow. The essence of loving God is admiring and enjoying all he is. It is this enjoyment of God that makes all of our other responses truly glorifying to him.

We all know this intuitively as well as from Scripture. Do we feel most honoured by the love of those who serve us from the constraints of duty, or from the delights of fellowship? God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

None of us has arrived at perfect satisfaction in God. But I have tasted that the Lord is good. By God's grace I now know the fountain of everlasting joy. This is what it means to love God.

July 18, 2024 - A People for His Name

"Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14)

It is scarcely possible to overemphasize the centrality of the name of God, that is, the fame of God, in motivating the mission of the church.

When Peter had his world turned upside down by the vision of unclean animals in Acts 10, and by the lesson from God that he should evangelize Gentiles as well as Jews, he came back to Jerusalem and told the apostles that it was all owing to God's zeal for his name.

It's not surprising that Peter would say that God's purpose was to gather a people for his name; because the Lord Jesus had stung Peter some years earlier with an unforgettable lesson.

You recall that, after a rich young man turned away from Jesus and refused to follow him, Peter said to Jesus, "See, we have left everything and followed you [unlike this rich fellow]. What then will we have?" (Matthew 19:27). Jesus responded with a mild rebuke, which in effect said that there is no ultimate sacrifice when you live for the name of the Son of Man. He said, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

The truth is plain: God is pursuing with omnipotent delight a worldwide purpose of gathering a people for his name from every tribe and language and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9).

July 19, 2024 - Above All Else

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! (Psalm 34:8)

To you who say you have never tasted the glory of God, I say, you have tasted many of its appetisers. Have you ever looked up at the sky? Have you ever been hugged? Have you ever sat in front of a warm fire? Have

you ever walked in the woods, sat by a lake, lain in a summer hammock? Have you ever drunk your favourite drink on a hot day or eaten anything good?

Every desire is either a devout or a distorted enticement to the glory of heaven. You have seen the shadows; look at the substance. You have walked in the warm rays of the day; turn and look at the sun itself — yes, through the protective and sharpening lens of the gospel. You have heard echoes of God's glory everywhere; tune your heart to the original music.

The best place to get your heart tuned is at the cross of Jesus Christ. "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). If you want the most concentrated display of the glory of God, look at Jesus in the Gospels, and look especially at the cross. This will focus your eyes and tune your heart and waken your taste buds so that you will see and hear and taste the glory of the true God everywhere.

That is what you were made for, don't throw your life away on shadows. God made you to see and enjoy his glory. Pursue that with all your heart and above all else.

July 20, 2024 - Love Your Enemies

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." (Luke 6:27)

There are two main reasons why Christians should love their enemies and do good to them.

One is that it reveals something of the way God is. God is merciful.

- He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)
- He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. (Psalm 103:10)
- Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

So, when Christians live this way, by God's power, we show something of what God is like.

The second reason is that the hearts of Christians are satisfied with God and are not driven by the craving for revenge or self-exaltation or money or earthly security.

God has become our all-satisfying treasure and so we don't treat our adversaries out of our own sense of need and insecurity, but out of our own fullness with the satisfying glory of God.

So, in both these reasons for loving our enemy we see the main thing: God is shown to be who he really is as a merciful God and as gloriously all-satisfying.

July 21, 2024 - The Bottom of it All

In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will. (Ephesians 1:4–5)

The experience of Charles Spurgeon is not beyond the ability of any ordinary Christian. Spurgeon, who lived from 1834 to 1892, was a contemporary and friend of George Mueller and Hudson Taylor. He served the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London for over thirty years as the most famous pastor of his day.

His preaching was so powerful that people were converted to Christ every week. His sermons are still in print today and he is held up by many as a model soul winner.

He recalls an experience when he was sixteen that shaped his life and ministry for the rest of his days. When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this.

I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, "I ascribe my change wholly to God."

What about you? Do you ascribe your conversion wholly to God? Is he the bottom of it all? Does this cause you to praise the glory of his sovereign, overcoming grace?

July 22, 2024 - Ideas Have Consequences

The aim of our charge is love. (1 Timothy 1:5)

Ideas have consequences — consequences that bless or destroy. People's behaviour — good and bad — does not come out of nowhere. It comes from prevailing views of reality that take root in the mind and bring forth good or evil.

One of the ways that the Bible makes plain the truth that ideas have practical consequences is by saying things like, "Whatever was written in former days was written . . . [that] we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). The ideas presented in the Scriptures produce the practical consequence of hope. Again, Paul says, "The aim of our charge is love" (1 Timothy 1:5). The imparting of ideas through a "charge" or through "instruction" produces love. Hope and love do not come from nowhere. They grow out of ideas — views of reality — revealed in the Scriptures.

Another way the Scriptures show us that ideas have consequences is by using the word "therefore" (1,039 times in the NASB). "Therefore" means that what follows comes from somewhere. For example, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Or: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Or: "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow" (Matthew 6:34).

If we want to live in the power of these great practical "therefores," we must be gripped by the ideas — the views of reality — that go before them and stand under them. Ideas have consequences. So, let's bring all our ideas under the authority of God's word.

July 23, 2024 - The Meek Shall Inherit

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)

Meekness begins when we put our trust in God. Then, because we trust him, we commit our way to him. We roll onto him our anxieties, our frustrations, our plans, our relationships, our jobs, our health. Then we wait patiently for the Lord. We trust his timing and his power and his grace to work things out in the best way for his glory and for our good.

The result of trusting God is that we don't give way to quick and fretful anger. But instead, we give place to wrath and hand our cause over to God and let him vindicate us if he chooses. James says, in this quiet confidence we are slow to speak and quick to listen (James 1:19). We become reasonable and open to correction (James 3:17). James calls this "the meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).

Meekness loves to learn, and it counts the corrective blows of a friend as precious (Proverbs 27:6). When it must say a critical word to a person caught in sin or error, it speaks from the deep conviction of its own fallibility and its own susceptibility to sin and its utter dependence on the grace of God (Galatians 6:1). The quietness and openness and vulnerability of meekness is very beautiful and very painful. It goes against all that we are by our sinful nature. It requires supernatural help to be meek.

July 24, 2024 - God's Electing Love

"Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day." (Deuteronomy 10:14–15)

God's electing love — the love by which he chooses a people for himself — is absolutely free. It is the gracious overflow of his boundless happiness guided by his infinite wisdom. This verse describes the delight God had in choosing Israel from all the peoples of the earth. Notice two things.

First, notice the contrast between verses 14 and 15. God was not somehow boxed in to choose this people — there were no limits to his choosing and he was not forced to choose them. The point is to explode the pagan idea that a god may have the right and authority to have his own people but no more.

The truth is that Yahweh is the only true God. He owns everything in the universe and has the right and authority to take any people he wants for his own special possession.

The second thing to notice is the way God exercises his sovereign freedom. He freely chose to take pleasure in loving the fathers. God's love for the fathers of Israel was free and merciful and wasn't constrained by anything that the fathers were in their Jewishness or in their virtue.

This is a lesson for us who are believers in Christ, God has chosen us just as freely. Not because of anything in us, but because God simply delighted to do it.

July 25, 2024 - Some Digital Dangers

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14)

Christians do not just coast through life like jellyfish floating in the current of contemporary culture. We live by the power of the Spirit and find our course by the word of God. We swim. Like dolphins, not jellyfish. Part of that course setting and power is expressed in thoughtful engagement with the digital realities of our day. Some of these dangers are: 1) The hook of constant curiosity

Digital devices offer a never-ending possibility for discovery. Even the basic operating systems can consume hours of curious punching and experimenting. Then there are the endless apps consuming weeks of your time as they lure you into their intricacies.

All this is very deceptive, giving the illusion of power and effectiveness, but leaving you with a feeling of emptiness and nervousness at the end of the day.

2) The empty world of virtual (un)reality

Brilliant and creative people are pouring hours and days of their lives into creating cities and armies and adventures that have no connection with reality. We have one life to live. All our powers are given to us by the real God for the real world leading to a real heaven and real hell.

3) "Personal" relations with a machine

Like no other invention, a computer comes closest to being like a person. You can play games with it. It will talk to you. It will always be there for you. The great danger here is that we really become comfortable with this manageable electronic "person," and gradually drift away from the unpredictable, frustrating, sometimes painful dealings with real human persons.

July 26, 2024 - Refresh in Christ

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1–2)

Jesus Christ is refreshing. So, seek the things that are above. Don't replace Christ with trifles. Flight from Christ into Christless leisure makes the soul parched. At first it may feel like freedom and fun to skimp on prayer and neglect the word. But then we pay: shallowness, powerlessness, vulnerability to sin, preoccupation with trifles, superficial relationships, and a frightening loss of interest in worship and the things of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is preeminent in all things (Colossians 1:18), including vacations and picnics and softball and long walks and cookouts. He invites us, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Do we want it? That is the question. Christ gives himself to us in proportion to how much we want his refreshment.

Peter's word to us about this is, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19–20). Repentance is not just turning away from sin, but also turning toward the Lord with hearts open and expectant and submissive ready to be refreshed.

July 27, 2024 - Start the Push Back

Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them. "Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them." Psalm 35:10

On June 6, the American College of Paediatricians along with 17 other medical and health policy organizations released a statement calling on U.S. medical professional associations to halt the promotion and standardization of so-called "gender affirming care."

The statement, known as the "Doctors Protecting Children Declaration," follows on the heels of the Cass Review, an in-depth review of medical research in the U.K., which found that the use of chemical and surgical "transition" interventions is not supported by evidence. In fact, at least five European countries have stopped these "transition" interventions for minors.

The U.S. is now an outlier, with major U.S. medical professional organizations continuing to promote puberty-blocking drugs, cross-sex hormones, and even "sex-change" surgery as treatment options for gender dysphoria. These ideologically captured institutions are choosing to put children at risk despite the evidence ... evidence that continues to pile up against this social experimentation. It is great to see the start of the push back.

July 28, 2024 - Go to Their Heads

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15

Pew Research reported that a growing majority of voters affirm that "a person's gender is determined by their sex at birth." In 2017, only 53% of voters thought gender was determined by sex. Today, 65% say it is—this after years of incessant preaching by activists and elites that gender is subjective and has nothing to do with a person's body.

This is the movement that has experienced the takeover by zealots. In the days after Obergefell, LGBTQ activists decided the culture was theirs for the taking, and there was no longer anyone standing in the way of their broader agenda. The "T" in particular, whose proponents haven't always had the best relationship with the "L" or the "G," decided to piggyback off their success, but it appears to have backfired. At the very least, their cultural progress has stalled, and the movement is losing ground. Perhaps we have just tired of the preaching. Consider how "pride month" festivities this year seem a bit subdued.

The lesson here is one of cautious encouragement. The cultural ascendency of bad ideas is not inevitable, nor is it irreversible. Often, those bad ideas carry within themselves the seeds of their own destruction, which means there is no excuse to give up or stop telling the truth, even when it seems the tide of cultural opinion is against us. Tides tend to turn, and movements that win quickly tend to let it go to their heads.

July 29, 2024 - Better Education for Children

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

The list of reasons for parental rebellion against public education has grown long in recent years. From trans ideology to DEI curriculum to the constant push for activism, many public school classrooms are more committed to indoctrination than instruction.

Though recently intensified, the ideological push to reject objective truth and teach social conformity is not new. Karl Marx promoted removing children from families and enrolling them in state education. Adolf Hitler targeted youth with social propaganda well before the beginning of World War II. And for decades, the heavily federally funded Planned Parenthood has monopolized sex education, teaching risky behaviour, abortion, birth control, and LGBTQ theory under taxpayers' noses and with their dollars.

More recently, even as reading, writing, and math scores plummeted, classrooms and libraries have been stocked with radically sexualized books with no other educational value other than to … radically sexualize kids. Students are forced to comply with the latest "trans equality" efforts and punished if they do not. Third through 5th graders are given "anti-racist reading lists," and The 1619 Project, which attempts to show the past as entirely slave-based and racist, boasts that "thousands of teachers across every state" use their content. Parents need better education for their children.

July 30, 2024 - Rights Belong to All

Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9

Rights belong to all, that's the nature of them. But they've also come from somewhere particular. The source is not just any God, but the God Who specifically became man in Jesus Christ, forever ennobling human nature and sparking the Christian revolution that would shape the West and inspire this declaration, that all are "created equal."

It's vital to note that Jesus did not invent the sanctity of life, the love of neighbour, or the inherent value of each individual human during His earthly ministry. Rather, through His life, obedience, death, and resurrection, He restored this concept inherent in creation, established by God's own words: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

At the heart of Christianity is the claim that our Saviour is also our Creator. The idea that humans have inherent, eternal value is a truth Christianity gives back to a fallen world. This claim and the rights inferred from it are real and universal precisely because the God who first made the world and us is. As the West loses touch with this God, it will also lose grasp on the concept of human rights.

July 31, 2024 - He Jesus Rejoiced

In that same hour he [Jesus] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." (Luke 10:21)

This verse is one of only two places in the Gospels where Jesus is said to rejoice. The seventy disciples have just returned from their preaching tours and reported their success to Jesus. All three members of the Trinity are rejoicing here: Jesus is rejoicing, but it says he is rejoicing in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is filling him and moving him to rejoice. Then at the end of the verse it describes the pleasure of God the Father.

What is it that has the whole Trinity rejoicing together in this place? It is the free, electing love of God to hide things from the intellectual elite and to reveal them to babes. What is it that the Father hides from some and reveals to others?

When the seventy disciples return from their evangelistic mission and give their report to Jesus, he and the Holy Spirit rejoice that God the Father has chosen, according to his own good pleasure — his own rejoicing — to reveal the Son to babes and to hide him from the wise.

The point is that God is free to choose the least likely candidates for his grace. God contradicts what human merit might dictate. He hides from the self-sufficient wise and reveals to the most helpless and unaccomplished.