

The Divine Conspiracy Lectures
Dallas Willard @ Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute



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The sessions were typed from the YouTube videos with good-faith effort but they are not verbatim. The [brackets] & bold disclose the scribe's commentary and also possible cross-reference of these sessions with other Dallas Willard teachings.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezbExj7pT1s&feature=related>

We must understand Jesus' pre-eminence to know Him and follow Him.

The 2nd & 3rd centuries found their answer to the questions of philosophy in Jesus. The intellectuals converted in mass precisely and they said because the gospel of Jesus Christ answered the questions philosophers had been trying to answer for 500 years or so.

Today we live in a situation where the culture has more or less taken Jesus and put Him aside. You don't think of Jesus as being particularly intellectual or intelligent. You think he is nice but not smart. If you ask a group of unsuspecting people who is the smartest person in the world, they won't think of Christ.

When we come with the message of Christ into our world, we get re-categorized. I want to try to shift that back and see Jesus Christ in a different kind of way.

Paul was the one who really came to understand the place of Christ in history.

Colossians 1:13 ff - *In Him. He delivered us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son. In Him, we have redemption the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created...by him and for him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. That he might have first place in everything.*

* The order of the chair you're seated on is Christ in action.

That is the picture that impressed the 1st Century. This is how the 1st Century body thought about Jesus. This is how we must think about Him today if we are to think about REALITY. It's all about "REALITY"!

Philippians 2:5-11

[7:00]

This mind that was in Christ Jesus was one that arose out of a community which we call the Trinity. The absolute stunning quality of love and trust in that community was that One who had it all could turn it all loose in confidence that He lost nothing.

He emptied himself. Took the form of a slave. Took the shape of human beings. The meaning of **the Cross** is the ultimate point of emptying out of one who was equal with God. Laying that down. Turning it loose in death on the cross.

That Cross became the center point of the Divine Conspiracy.

Someone asked me a few days ago, "Why did Jesus die on the cross?" So that Mel Gibson could make the movie! It is true, profoundly true. Jesus planned it and

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brought it off. All through the agent that has stood that as a high point in human history - **The Cross.**

What is God doing to do it that way?

Who would have chosen to do it that way? No one.

That's for our benefit for that's where we are in union with God and with Christ. We walk forward in what He's doing now as as we join Him on the cross.

The reality of Christ and the Cross in human history is what brings us into the flow of the single greatest force in human life which is the Cross.

Believing that totally flips everything else upside down. It affirms a Kingdom which is eternal and different from anything human.

Philippians 2:9 - *"Therefore God has highly exalted His name above every name. Every knee should bow, every tongue should confess."*

* When I was younger and a bit meaner than I am now, I use to believe this was a picture of Christ standing with His foot on the neck of every unbelieving person making them say, "You're Lord." I don't think that's the picture at all. I think the picture will be one of great relief. I think it will be people who have not accepted Him will thank God that He is who He is and the world is a reflection of that kind of God.

When we think of *The Divine Conspiracy*, we are thinking of the action of God in history. Jesus Christ is the central personality of God in history.

The Kingdom - Jesus taught mainly about the Kingdom of God on the assumption that He and His Father and His Spirit are King. [11:30]

The Kingdom was what Jesus mainly spoke about. That was His gospel. The Kingdom of God is a kind of life.

Matthew 13 - Parables of the Kingdom of the Heavens [12:15]

* v. 31 - Like a mustard seed - small, insignificant, meaningless, tiny

Christ dying on the cross - insignificant. That's the way the Kingdom is. The Kingdom from the human point of view looks like nothing. Small and insignificant.

* v. 33 - Yeast - like a virus [goes viral]. Hidden in a bushel. [13:20]

Leaven works quietly and keeps growing just like the mustard seed.

Originally intended the book to be titled "The Kingdom Among Us".

The Divine Conspiracy is God's plan and process of overcoming evil with good in human history. [15:45]

That is why the CROSS and the RESURRECTION

Knowledge

[16:15]

Knowledge is what we bring. That is the battle we are in when we bring the message of The Divine Conspiracy. If you don't understand what knowledge is, you won't know how you stand in the battle. The constant problem for human life is to find an adequate basis for life in knowledge. We need to know what we're doing.

By in large we suffer from a lack of knowledge. Most of all from a lack of knowledge of God. What is God and what is God doing?

The story of human progress is the story of progressive knowledge.

We are use to it and we know more and more what to do.

- * Virus not humans are the head of the food chain. They want to eat us.
- * Terrorism exists today because the increase of knowledge.

~ Knowledge is absolutely central. What we bring when we talk about Jesus Christ is the knowledge of reality.

[Knowledge (def.)] ***"We know something when we are able to represent it as it is on an adequate basis of thought and experience."***

Not just true guesses but based in experience and thought. In the case of the teachings we bring as followers of Christ to the world, it involves the Bible, the Church, Church history and the community. Knowledge is a communal kind of thing. We come with the message of Christ, we come out of the context of the presence of the Bible, Church, history, the overarching presence of the Spirit and our best experience and thought.

~ Knowledge involves Truth

You can believe but not know. You can guess and be right

- * Guess on an investment and be correct and make \$

You can't guide life by what 'happens' to be true, by guessing, especially about God. Guessing - you don't know if it's true until it's all over. We need knowledge not just truth. Truth enables us to deal with reality in a way that is good for us.

John 3:16 - Whoever believes in Him (puts their confidence in Him [22:15]

That's a big idea. Is there another religion where God gave His only son?

This is a watershed issue

Does God really love the world and did He act in the world that way? Is God really like that? If that is true, everything has changed. If that's true, I can trust God with everything. I don't have to run my life, fight with others for the bones of life like two dogs in an alley. I can release my life into God's hands & trust Him. I can do what He says in confidence. It is a good thing not just something designed to make me miserable.

Why do people perish for lack of knowledge?

[24:00]

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If you lack knowledge, reality will run over you, desert you or leave you out.
If we act with knowledge & truth, our actions harmonize with reality otherwise not or just by chance. This is why is so important to get the right take on what God is doing, on there being a God, on the nature of the world we live in.

Three Background Stories in Our Culture Today

[24:50]

1. Naturalism - Matter is all there is; Visible world is the only world.
In no area of competence is knowledge of God required (PhD exams)
Guiding philosophy of a major segment of our culture, mostly Universities
2. Nirvana - New Age; The World we see is an illusion; The real world is non differentiation where you & I are not distinct. We're actually the same.
3. Theism - Is generally pushed aside or treated as an odd cultural artifact
The ultimate reality is the God of Theism all powerful and all loving.
Whether we are right or wrong is the great question.
Christians talk as if there is an ultimate difference where you wind up
If you believe certain things, you will not be OK [meaning w/out God in Hell]
That sticks in the craw of many people in our culture today.

REALITY is totally unyielding to false belief. TRUTH is unforgiving. It does not change if you have certain opinions. No one has ever made a belief true by believing it. If we get it wrong, we're in trouble. REALITY is what you run into if you are wrong.

* Running out of gas even if you believe you have gas and you don't,
run into reality by running out of gas

Truth frees you from bondage to reality you disagree with. If you are true in your reality, you will experience wonderful freedom. Truth of gas in your tank will facilitate your operation and you will not wind up in a disagreement with reality.

***The primary issue in The Divine Conspiracy is Truth -
...Is it truth or falsehood?***

* Tower of Babel - human efforts to succeed by human abilities [29:55]

We will be successful leaving God out

Today's Babel - Secular knowledge system of the Universities & Professions

Operates in the idea of **separation of church & state**

If it was assumed that the church had essential knowledge of life, without which human beings could live well or live at all, there would be no question of the **separation of church and state**. Separation of religion from political processes all predicated on the idea that religion had nothing to say about reality.

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If you practiced a form of religion that would substantially transform the human situation, there would be no issue of separation of church and state any more than the separation of physics from state.

[science & state, medicine & state, health insurance & state].

[See Rousseau's *Social Contract* about lack of religion in society.]

* Transcendental Meditation had a round for a while to transform secular society but it was not effective.

[His slip of the tongue - "Transcendental Medication"]

Can it do what Jesus Christ can do?

Is there anything Jesus can do that others can't?

The greatest challenge facing the church today - do they have KNOWLEDGE that is essential to human life or is it just another wild faith project where you launch yourself into something and pretend you are being delivered?

~ **Human Limitations to Knowledge are Great** [33:40]

Can we achieve on our own the knowledge in order to live? No

The Bible is talking about this issue. Suppose the Bible contains the most important information about the most important issues in human life.

Suppose there is a God of love who actually speaks to human beings.

* Carl Sagan can tell me about the Cosmos. What am I going to do?

I need trust the information for what I will do - moral and vocational choices.

The Bible introduces you to a God who just might speak to you and give you guidance in your life by walking with you and talking with you and helping you.

Knowledge & Self-Will

Good thing we are limited in our knowledge because our **Self Will** is unlimited so it is good our human limitations.

"Evil comes from will beyond knowledge" (Descartes)

Knowledge is limited and it grows very slowly.

God allows knowledge to grow slowly that we have opportunity to grow morally

Knowledge brings power; power brings responsibility.

Moral growth has not kept up with our technological development.

We are dealing with people who don't care if you do destroy them

The great issue on the human stage - How will the civilization that is still basically Christian deal with a culture that has a totally different take on God, who they are and what they should do? Do we just bomb them into oblivion?

Jesus is still working on the stage and the Divine Conspiracy continues to grow.

[* "Jesus popularity spread through all of Syria" (Matthew 4)]

Self will is set against TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE because truth and knowledge always limit what you can DESIRE. Our desires always exceed REALITY. [40:30]

* Credit Cards - We will what is not. Credit is one way to will what is not

[Cash = we spend what we know, what is truth, what we have]

Romans 1 - The most important part of social analysis in the whole Bible
v. 18 - *They turn away from God and suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

Comes out of the basic conflict between will & knowledge.

* **Acts 8:9-25** - Simon offered \$ to John & Peter to get the power.
He jumped to his death. His self will to fly was greater than knowledge

God looks at the human heart - the will. [42:30]

God is trying to perfect the will in human history. [Perfect as the Father]

God's intent for each of us is that we should become the kind of person whom He can empower to do whatever we want.**

The real issue - what kind of person am I?

Philippians 2 - God in Jesus turned it all loose.

He subjected himself to death on the cross. He showed a will, a character.
In our heart we decide what we are really about.

What will govern us - will it be God or will it be us?

Jesus abandoned his will. **Joyful, delight, power come together as God grows the human being in the kind of character of Jesus.**

Suppose a significant % of the human race had His character?

You can see life would be very different

That is the intention of the Divine Conspiracy**

God looks at the heart - [who] we really will be. What governs us? The central issue the surrendering the will abandoned to God delighted in Him and His will. As it grows it is perfectly safe for us to have power and knowledge. [45:30]

The current situation - God is not obvious because He is interested in the will

God doesn't overwhelm you. He comes in gentle ways

God is so big that if He didn't hide from us, we couldn't hide from Him.

That is why there is a Divine Conspiracy. A conspiracy is something hidden.

He remains hidden and available to those who seek Him.

* **Matthew 13:13-17** - Why Jesus taught in parables

Those who see, can not see...hear, can not hear

He who has ears, let him hear. We have ears for sorting & arranging things.

The need to adjust reality to suit our will.

Eyes to not see is God provides for the will that doesn't want Him

If you don't want Him, you don't have to have Him...at least not now.

This is fundamental to Jesus' way of teaching and to the Bible

A Provision for the Human will

[49:30]

"God can not ravish, only woo. The creatures are to be one with him but yet themselves." CS Lewis, Screwtape Letters, Letter 8

It is important for us to understand why God is not obvious. He is not obvious because of the need to allow human desire and will to go it's way because that is what defines human character. Gods intent for each of us to grow to the point to where He can empower us to do what we want, but you realize there is a lot of work to do on the "wanter" for Him to empower our wants.

God calling forth the human will and allowing the human being to have an identity. God is present but in ways that anyone who wishes to deny can deny.

* Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac - they are very different but not visible. You can see it if you want to and not see it if you don't want to.

How can people be in the presence of Jesus and deny him? People can choose to. His simple life in the boondocks in a manger. He comes in as an outsider. *"Where did you get your authority?"* John the Baptist was an OT prophet who identified Jesus and that gave him a place to stand humanly speaking. He was rejected.

"If the rulers of this world had understood the Lord of glory, they would have not crucified Him." (Paul in I Corinthians 2:8)

Would the rulers of the world crucified Him if they knew what Paul described in Colossians 1?

Jesus was silent because Pontius Pilate would have not crucified Him. Jesus was working the whole thing to His ends. Jesus was controlling the process. He was not a victim even though He looked like a victim.

Post Resurrection - I would have gone back to Pontius Pilate and said, "Can we have that conversation about truth again?"

I would have visited the Sanhedrin in session.

* Jesus confronting Peter as Satan - Two kingdoms of God & Man

Even after the resurrection, he was conspiring quietly.

"He became visible only to those chosen before hand." (Acts 10:41)

The conspiratorial nature of God in human history is there to allow human beings to make our choices, both individually and in groups (nations) like an election. The choice will be a manifestation of the character and will of the people. "It's the economy, stupid!" Is it really? Suppose we make decisions based on the economy. We make choices based on our character.

The **Church** itself can be looked at in all kinds of ways. We look at the church the past and make it out the way we want it to be.

Col. 3:1-3 - *"If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your affections on*

things above not things on Earth. You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."

John 3 - Same lesson to Nicodemus. Like the wind, you can't see it
If you are set to interpret the hidden part in others ways, you can do that.
It's up to you. You don't have to accept the reality of Christ in the Church.
Your life is hid with Christ in God. God is present, but... [59:20]

The Divine Conspiracy - God's plan to overcome evil with good in the grinding processes of human nature. The Kingdom works that way.

You are tied into the reality of the Kingdom of God that is going to bring to pass that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God.

Isaiah 6 - The earth is filled with the glory of God but not the knowledge of the glory of God until the future. Isaiah is faced with God in the temple. "Here am I. Send me." The knowledge of God is painfully absent. The future is where the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

The Crucifixion is the center point of the revelation of the hidden **kingdom**.
Colossians 1:20 - *"Reconcile all things to Himself."* [1:00:50]

* Hollywood - What's this all about? Individuals & groups move toward the reconciliation of all things in Christ.

"If I be lifted up (the cross) I will draw all humankind to me."

One way or another they will all come to Him.

* Moses and the symbol of the serpent - Poisonous self will

If you don't know the **kingdom of God**, the human self will is all that is left.

The cross is designed to help people see what self will does. What living as one's own king does. Looking at that, recognizing it and turning to God in Christ and giving up one's self will and saying I want to live in the invisible kingdom of God which is now available.

People of Christ bring in truth in a "Community of Crucifixion" [1:03:20]

Human beings can't really deal with truth on their own.

The truth will make you free is more aptly the truth will make you flee.

The truth human beings get apart from God will nearly always be destructive and it will be used for our purposes.

I Timothy - The household of God - the church of the living God, the pillar and support of truth. The Church is the pillar and it supports the truth.
Truth can only be endured and promoted in the community of grace where self-will does not rule but where love rules. That's why you want to understand Jesus did not say the Truth will make you free.

* USC Philosophy Building Elevator, *"The Truth will make you free."*

Apparently you don't have to believe it. It just happens.

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* Babel - Blind confidence in human research and problems will be solved.

"If you continue in my word (living in it), then you are my disciples indeed then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (**John 8:32**)

Confidence in Jesus and living with Him and being His disciple will enable you to know the truth and be set free.

The Issue of Social Authority - Who has knowledge (truth)? [1:06:40]

That is the issue underlying all the battles of our day - Who has knowledge!

The message of Christ through its institutions (church & schools) has been set aside as a basis of life, truth & knowledge.

The secular mind has redefined knowledge that it alone has it.

Christians often have conceded this. The single greatest terrible mistake is the willingness of the church to walk away from knowledge. The result is determining policy for life is left to the secular mind.

[Obama - A secular, liberal, university professor who considers the government as the best source of knowledge to provide the good life.]

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead.

That is the pressure point of the work that we do today.

The basic idea in the first session is this - There is a Divine Conspiracy and it will win. It is a conspiracy because God must be hidden that humanity may take the alternatives that presents itself to SELF-WILL and CHARACTER grow out of that [decision].

* Raising CHILDREN - at a certain point allowing them to do what they want to learn wrong & right.

Character only develops with freedom. This is a profound spiritual truth about the meaning of human history and what God is doing in the cosmos.

There are a certain amount of dead hens you have to work through before you see what is good and what is right. That's true of individual life and corporate life.

When you look at the contemporary scene - business, military, music, pop culture - that's what's really going on. God is at work far beyond what we call the church. God is just as much involved in business, science, art, etc. I say that because of what I believe about the Kingdom of God.

The **Church** is not the Kingdom of God but a peculiar manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

* The parable of the wheat & the tares.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 1** ~ ~ ~

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArRHjUoatT8>

I. HUMAN NATURE - What is a Human Being?

This is the biggest battle in the contemporary scene

Is there human nature? The official response, "There is none."

The drive to total liberty developed into the 20th Century

The essential mark of the Babel orientation of human life

* School ground ? - Should people be able to do what they want?

Democracy - Exaltation of the human will; Everyone should be able to do what they want to do. That is a perversion of human nature.

This is only true if we don't have a Nature that limits what you can do

Everything that has a nature has limitation

* A podium isn't a toothpick

NATURE - Limits freedom of doing what you want to do

* Looks, talent, size, strength are part of "Nature"

Bad arguments of "Nature" such as Racism, Feminism (Biology is destiny)

"You are a woman, therefore you can not do..."

No Nature = No Limits

John Dewey rejected the idea of Human Nature

Natural Law can not be evoked as a basis for law.

Traditionally there is natural law. Legal laws should be based on laws of nature.

* Justice Kennedy - The basis for a Texas Sodomy decision was public sentiment. "What does the public like? Want to do?"

"Wait, that is wrong. There is 'natural law' or 'laws of God'."

We have moved to what is right by the public as the basis for law.

Nature can not be invoked to support Heterosexuality.

* Massachusetts law evoked public sentiment in support of gay marriage.

"What about Nazi public sentiment?" They would say, "No!"

But they have already abandoned Nature as a basis for law.

DESIRE - Denying Human Nature takes care of all the issues where DESIRE wants free play at one fell swoop and turns it into at most a social issue. You can be told you are wrong if you want what society does not desire. You can be controlled on the basis of that. Only because you have group desire. That is why political correctness becomes so important in our time.

"Desire" vs. "Good" - the underlying issue

That redefines the meaning of "love".

Desire can be for what is not Good. You can not define good in terms of Desire.

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If you define "Good" in terms of Desire, then automatically if you desire something, it is good. Most people can not push beyond that because they have desired things that are not good. One of the meanings of "regret".

LOVE - To love someone means you will what is good for them.

Bene-volence (def.) - "Will the good"

If I love you, sometimes I will not will what you desire because sometimes you desire what is not good.

To love a CHILD often means we do not do what they want.

To love Me would mean that I often would not do what I want.

Self love - often not do what I desire to do and do what I do not desire to do
Tremendously important to learn what it means to live for God

What God says is what is good for us

Self will - I want what I want - Anything goes

The poison of Self Will corrupts the good in human life.

* Teach a CHILD - It isn't always good to do what you want.

You should not - "ought not" - do that or you're a bad boy.

NATURE & WILL & DESIRE

Connections in things in reality independently of what we think or desire

Our salvation is to find what those are. We are not smart enough to do that.

A God who speaks in love becomes central to the well being of human life

* Sexuality - God said certain things about sexuality but they do not conform with what people may want in the area of sexuality.

When you cut lose from the teachings God says about it, you say "Anything goes" as long as you have consenting adults.

You stepped into an area where there is a nature. You can choose an action but not the consequences. Results will be there.

* AIDS - Millions will die to a disease that is fundamentally tied to wrong sexuality and no one can say a word about that.

Human WILL and DESIRE has institutionalized in a culture that rejects TRUTH and goes with DESIRE.

But nothing lacks a nature - parts & properties * Squirrels or Brussel Sprouts

Whenever we step over the boundary of Nature, God goes first.

Because God is nature writ-large. He determines what nature is elsewhere.

[16:30]

Romans 1 - Where people cast aside God's nature. Profound analysis of the human situation. 1:23, "*Even though they knew God, they did not honor God.*"

When you start to deny the reality of God, everything comes loose.

It is now left to the human capacity to discern and act in the boundaries of reality.

* "Holy Cow" - How can a cow be holy? [Holy Crap!]

With the rejection of God, we loosened our mind from reality.

The MIND will be directed by the WILL and it will not function correctly.

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The WILL is supposed to be directed by the MIND under TRUTH.

The human BODY is the first thing under the direction of the human WILL.

- Why Sex & Violence so prominent in a society that is directed by DESIRE.

When the MIND no longer governs the will by TRUTH, then the will turns to the BODY and says, "I will squeeze out of you all that good - what I DESIRE."

I John - "*Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride (dominance) of life*"

Turn from God, your BODY becomes god.

God first then degrading passions (**Romans 1:26**)

Natural progression to have good in what is desired.

Once you turn to DESIRE, you have no way to limit it. It is not self limiting.

If your life is built around DESIRE, you will never be satisfied

"*If there is no God, everything is permitted.*" Dostoevsky 19th Cent.

Institutions of Knowledge in 19th Century attacked God

Became more common place - the Arts picked it up.

If you are not rooted in the KNOWLEDGE of God, it will seem as there is no restriction on what you might do to fulfill DESIRE. Turn to the BODY to use it to gratify DESIRE. Men lose the capacity to discern Good & Evil. [23:30]

Ephesians - Read Paul as though he was a University Professor talking about social & psychological reality. Currently in the context of knowledge, "Sin" is not a category. It does not explain anything. We can't introduce evil or sin to explain.

* Educators are farmers who don't believe in weeds or bugs. They believe in fertilizer. They can't deal with evil. It is not a category of explanation. Sin is not a category. For Paul, Calvin, Luther, sin was a category.

Ephesians 4:17 - "Gentiles" people without God who stand outside the covenant relationships with God. They are getting to know Him as His mystery is being revealed.

"*The futility of the mind*" - the MIND that doesn't get anywhere by thinking. They don't work. They have distorted reality in their premises. "Calloused" - Don't feel.

FEELINGS - We live in a sensual age. FEELINGS. We don't learn to "feel good".

That's why we are so addictive. "I gotta have the feeling." The only way out of addictions is to realize you have a will distinct from your feelings. You don't have to feel good. If you live for feelings, you will become callous. If you live for feelings, you will do whatever is required to get the feeling.

Read Paul as what he was. Paul was a brilliant analytical mind.

Once you get that callous MIND and you misunderstood your NATURE in such a way that you're only going for FEELING, then social institutions & arrangements will conform to that. [30:00]

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Romans 1:28, *"not acknowledge God any longer"* - the linchpin. If you have God, then you have NATURE and a God who speaks tells you the TRUTH you need to know.

"God gave them over to a depraved mind" - a MIND that doesn't work.

Today's discourse - you listen to a MIND that doesn't work.

* We live in a politics of contempt - Imagine if we focused on helping people for what is good and what is right. If a candidate said, *"I believe the American people will make a choice. If they choose you, I am going to be rooting for you to succeed because I want the good for the country."*

Fallen Humanity - When DESIRE and WILL does not square with TRUTH and REALITY, we see social institutions and arrangements adapt to that situation.
[31:45]

Romans 1 - God leaves you free. He lets you go if you want to.

When there is a restraint by the knowledge of God that is institutionalized [the Church] you see a knowledge that these are wrong and people step away from them. [sin, evil].

"They know the ordinance of God" - We still know of God but don't accept it.

"They give hearty approval"

Today - No recognized body of moral knowledge.

* Schools & Professional institutions.

When NATURE disappears, KNOWLEDGE and TRUTH disappear.

"Political Correctness" is what is correct in someone's view.

All we have now is "Pressure Groups" pushing their way.

The Church & the way of Christ is just another pressure group.

WILL is the only thing you have to deal with.

TRUTH UNCHANGING - Does not change fundamentally. Good & right are built into human nature.

The human capacity to know the good and the right is distorted by the human WILL to fulfill DESIRE. We want what we want.

This is why a divine source of knowledge is essential to human life. [37:30]

The Genius of Jesus - Jesus sums up the whole law by referring to essential aspects of the human being.

"Love God with you heart, mind, soul & strength and love your neighbor."

Love is to will what is good. To love God is to will what is good for God.

~ The Problem of Integrity - If you intend to do something, you do it. If you don't intend to do it, you don't do it. Integrating what we believe with what we do.

Paul - **Romans 7** - "Disintegrated self"

* Peter, "I will not deny you". He meant it but there was something in Peter that he didn't recognize that will control his behavior. Jesus was teaching Him very carefully that he would deny him three times. Why three times? Once and you

could say, "Whoops. I slipped." But three times? Hard time explaining it. Peter went out and wept when realized there was something in him that was not being directed by him but was directing him.

This is the analysis of the essential aspects of the human being. If you love, then that will pull all of them together. That has to be directed toward God and then love your neighbor. If you don't love God, you can't love your neighbor. Love God then we can actually love our neighbor. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the law. As Paul explains, "*If you love your neighbor, you will not...steal, etc.*"

What is love and how does it work?

HUMAN NATURE - Six Parts in Human Nature

[Diagram - Renovation of the Heart, p. 37]

Soul, Spirit/Will, Mind, Body, Feelings, Relationships

The parts have to be aligned before we can be subject to the will of God. There's going to have to be an invasion by the Word and Spirit of Christ, a living power in it's own right, that comes into the heart through the **MIND**. When that is accepted the result is faith in Christ which re-establishes union with God. The primary function of the center part [mind] is to trust God. It can't do that on it's own. It has to interact with other parts.

* Eve in the Garden - Received a solicitation to not trust God. The temptation - take it into your own hands. Get what you want.

In the Garden: *Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life*

To seduce the individual into taking things into their own hands and not trust God. All we regard as wrong, theft, lying, so, all come back to mistrusting God.

Once the **spirit** [mind/will] comes alive to God because the Gospel that is lodged in the **MIND**, the individual begins the process of working with God for the transformation of the whole self.

"Submit your bodies as living sacrifice. Don't be conformed by the world but be transformed by the renewal of the mind." **(Romans 12:1)**

When aligned with God, the MIND is renewed.

* Peter didn't have to think about denying Christ. He didn't have to ask, "Shall we deny him?" He just did it. He may have been ready for a soldier with a sword. It was a little girl who tripped him up. The social situation and what the **BODY** is ready to do comes together and is ready to act.

The **SOUL** is the computer that runs the whole show. The **SPIRIT** [mind/will] is the Executive Center. You don't want to hear about the computer. You just want it to work. The Executive Center can change the computer [the condition of the SOUL.] Through spiritual disciplines...that's what goes on in the transformation of the whole self. This is human nature. Everyone has this.

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If they are dead in sin, they don't have the relationship to Christ but they can still hear the word and the Spirit can move in them. If they don't have this and they turn in worship their own bodies and their own soul and their whole life is devoted to themselves.

II. The ROLE of a Human Being - "Dominion with God" [46:50]
[\[Train to Reign\]](#)

The Divine Conspiracy is not to steam roll everything, it is to elicit love & obedience through the development of character so that out of human history comes a certain kind of community that is forever going to have a role forever in the universe.

This is why it's worth the awful things that have happened in it.

Genesis 1:26-30 - The "Creation Covenant"

- "Let us make man in our image. Let him have **dominion** (responsibility)."

The assignment for humans is to be responsible for the Earth. [eternal re-purposed]. That's built into human nature * Reforest Mars * Save Whales

It's built into human beings to save the Earth. This is the foundation of a genuine Environmental Ethic not just hugging trees but actually thinking about the world. Is this a lost thought? Because we failed, are we off the hook? No.

Psalms 8 The Psalmist is impressed with the greatness of God and that God cares about Human Beings. [50:00]

v. 1, 3 - God is great and He cares about humans.

v. 2 - A child & infant - inverted nature of the Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Man - "foes"

v. 4 - "What is man that you are mindful of him?"

God thinks about human beings. He cares about humans.

* Homer, "You might meet a god under any rock who might turn you into a turtle."

v. 6-8 - "You make him to rule over the works of your hands."

Function of Humans? To rule, to bring good to pass in creation.

* A CHILD wants to make something and wants to give to his parent.

* Older people want to leave the world a better place.

We create out of what God has already made. This is something to be done under God. He's made us to relate to Him and in relating to Him we would be able to rule. We can't do it on our own. We still try but our efforts are thwarted by our limitations & lack of good will.

Isaiah 63:11-12 - Leadership: God & Moses working together [55:10]

Cooperative aspect of our work with God. Is. 63 - God use to work with us.

v. 11 "Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses."

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Moses acted and God made it happen. Moses' right hand and God's glorious arm acting together. That is the way we were meant to live on the Earth under God. God never set us out to be responsible for the Earth in our own strength.

Before Adam sinned, he didn't sweat. He wasn't acting in his own strength.

We sweat to produce bread or demand other people sweat to produce for us.

It will be sweat if you have to do it in your own strength.

Mark 4 - Jesus speaks to the fig tree and by speaking brings in to play the power of God. He acted & spoke with the power of God. He was totally aligned with Kingdom of God. When we work in the Kingdom of God, we work in the Community of God. Jesus was prepared to do that. Moses had a lot of opposition but when he acted, God acted with him.

Luke 16 - Unjust Steward

Luke 19 - Parable of the Talents [59:30]

Fired by the boss then finds a way to help himself and help his boss

Jesus uses real life circumstances to illustrate important points

Ruling is the vocation and calling of man

"Make friends (God) by the means of mammon"

Use money to advance God's cause. That's how you rule.

"Faithful in little things" = small things you have; money is a smaller thing

Money & Prayer are the 1st two steps in Kingdom acting.

Advance the cause of God for good around you as you rule in that aspect of your life.

Hebrews 1 and 2 - Jesus is a Glorious Being [1:02:15]

The calling in relation to Jesus. How Jesus relates with the cosmos

1:2 - Through whom He made the world (standard teaching as in Colossians)

2:5 - Quotes Psalm 8 - Place of human beings how we relate to Jesus

2:8 - "*All things subject to Him*" (human beings not Jesus) but not all are subject yet.

"The Babel Imperative" (R & D) is driving to have all things under human control - Not until there is a huge change in humanity.

[News reports of "Designer Genetics"; Celine Deon's genderless clothing]

2:9 - We do see Him (Jesus) made human (lower than angels). Jesus comes into the human scene and eventually will pull them up where everything can be subject to them because they are subject to God.

[to a level of ruling when we are transformed to be like and reign with Christ.]

2:10 "*Bringing many sons to glory*"

God's intention for each of us is that we should grow to the point where He can empower us to do what we want. This is the ROLE for the human being. This is what God made them for. He made them so this whole cosmos will turn out to be something subjected to God through them.

[The Church - You & Me - being readied to rule.]

God's Global Management Team]

Revelation 22:5 [1:07:14]

"They shall see His face. His name will be on their foreheads. The Lord God shall illumine them and they shall reign forever and ever."

Who is the "they"? The "they" is you!

Matthew 11:11 - *"Anyone in the Kingdom is greater than John the Baptist"*

Add that to your list of things to think about when you are thinking about human nature. When you live in the Kingdom of Heavens as a disciple of Jesus, you are related to something greater than John the Baptist. You can quarrel with this. It's up to you what you do with this. Keep that in the back of your mind when you are trying to think about your nature.

HUMAN NATURE is... *"Here is the truth about you"* [1:10:15]

I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

This the true dignity of the Human Being. This is why they were worth dying for!

[I'm to die for]

Isaiah 53 - *"He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."*

You are spiritual is substance,
you are never ceasing in duration,
you are ruling or creative in destiny.

Your life as a spiritual being is completed only by living in and from the Kingdom government from the Heavens. That's why Jesus' message is *"Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand."* ("has drawn near").

Preached Message - Will we preach this or preach something else? What we see in the church is the result of the message that is preached...and it isn't this one. [1:12:10]

What do we tell people? Dare we preach the message that Jesus preached?

"Repent" - Think about your thinking. Have a thought about your thoughts in the light of this new fact that the rule of God is now immediately available for you to live in. That's what's being presented in the gospels over and over again. People are pushing their way in because they discovered the presence of the Kingdom in the presence of the King. Jesus was a King. That's what Pilate put on his cross because He understood that was what was being claimed.

* *"Saying there is another King named Jesus."* (Acts 17:7)

You don't have a King without a Kingdom.

One of the deep sicknesses of our theology is that we preach a Jesus without a Kingdom. [1:14:09]

That's why we have a lot of Christians who believe in Jesus but don't believe in God. They don't understand who Jesus was so they don't really have confidence in God. Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now available.

* Walking into a building for the first time led by someone who knows the building. "Turn here, the auditorium is at hand".

All of the gospels are a manifestation of the presence of the kingdom to people who will turn to Jesus.

LOVE [= the Role of Completed Human Nature] [1:15:20]

To love is to will the good of the beloved. To know what God wills for things enables us to know what is good for them. Love can't be separated from God. If we are going to fulfill our role, we will live with love for all of creation.

* Jonathan Edwards treatise "Virtue"

Love is the principle of the Kingdom of God. When we come to the place where we are possessed by love, then we are ready to rule. If we love God with every dimension of our being, that puts us in position to be a fully functioning human being. For the first time human beings, because they are loved by God, love God and through that love others, they are in position to be a fully functioning human being.

The partial versions of love that do so much to harm human life where love is confused with desire and anger results when desire is not fulfilled are done away with. Every part of our being - love God with all heart, mind, soul & strength - something that is increasingly true of us. As that personal reality of love, which is God after all, possesses our being, it enables us to live a free and joyous life beyond legalism. We don't aim at doing the right thing, we aim at being the kind of person who would do the right thing. That's the kind of person who is possessed by love and who loves indiscriminately with everything they come in contact. We fulfill the law because we are that way.

"Perfect love casts out all fear" - We are able to live without fear because we know that we are loved by God, and that we love God and through God we love others and that provokes others toward love of us. Generally speaking, they will love those possessed by love. They will come to the place where they can live without fear because they are secure in the love of God and they themselves are loving others.

In contrast... C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*

"If man is made ultimate, causal force will eventually rule and thereby abolish humanity by making everything subject to the thrust of desire, the desires of some few who are able to gain the upper hand by force."

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C.S. Lewis had prophetic insight into the meaning of **The Babel Imperative** to abolish human beings as free people devoted to good through love and replaced them with people under the domination of other people who live only in terms of their own desires.

The Divine Conspiracy is God's aim to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's kingdom by bringing out a world and history wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ Himself.

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HUMAN NATURE is built to become like Christ and to live in the Kingdom of God. The process of spiritual growth is the process of doing that.

[**Matthew 6:26**

"Are you {your HUMAN NATURE} not much more valuable than these?"]

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 2 @ 1:19:44** ~ ~ ~

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYQPF7_IQ

Ministry in the Kingdom of God

Kingdom of God is like leaven. Enters into a reality, works away and has a life of its own

"The teaching about the Kingdom of God saved my faith in Christ"

Mark 4:26-29 - "All by itself" principle

The part that saved my faith was "the seed sports up and grows. How it does he does not know." As a minister and a Christian, I do not have to make it happen. I learned the more I tried to make it happen, the less it would work. What I had to do was to learn to speak the Word and live in the Kingdom and let the results take care of themselves. When I would do that I would begin to see change in the people I was ministering to. **I had to get out of God's way and let the kingdom work and count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom.**

Progressively I think I learned not to try to get people to do anything, to just stop that all together. It was hard because I was in ministry in a Southern Baptist Church and I was expected to produce results.

* DL Moody to a staggering drunk. "Mr. Moody, I am one of your converts."
"You must be one of mine because your clearly not one of God's."

I could get out of the business of making things happen.

Do I still win souls? Yes. It is more in terms of putting the sickle in, watching for people who need a little help at a certain transition. Most of what I'm doing is watching the seed grow. Plant the seed, watch it grow. **You don't make it happen. That is one of the most important things for us to understand if we are to participate in The Divine Conspiracy as leaders and ministers to have confidence in the power of the Word of the Kingdom.**

We do need to convey the idea that there is a Kingdom of God we can seek and find through Jesus Christ. If someone wants to find the Kingdom, I should present Jesus to them. I should talk about Him. I should speak about *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. I should magnify Him and lift Him up and say the wonderful things about Him that are true of Him. In appropriate ways keep that before people's minds. That is the way to bring people to the point of understanding the Kingdom and to bring them to the point where they are prepared to enter the Kingdom of God.

Jesus taught about the Kingdom constantly. "*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else that you need will be added.*"

What a glorious promise! *Now what does it mean?*

The Nature of God

[7:20]

We must start with the nature of God because it is His kingdom. The Kingdom is a spiritual reality. The Word of the Kingdom is a spiritual reality - it has a life of it's own. John 6, Jesus insulted the Jewish people by saying they have to eat His flesh and drink His blood (**John 6:63**) "*The Words that I speak to you are spirit, they are life.*" Through the words He spoke He communicated His substance as a person. What does that mean? You participate in His substance by taking in His word. They are "Spirit"..."Life"

1. God is Spirit - Ex. 3:14

[9:00]

I Am *that* I Am. My being rests on My being.

I do not depend on anything else. Totally Self sufficient being.

With that you don't have God. What characterizes God as Spirit.

John 4 - Spirit - God is something that is self sufficing, self dependence.

Our free will is our spirit. It is free because it is not determined by something else. It's extremely important because that's the part of you that relates you to God - your will, your heart. If your will is tied into God, you take on the glorious features of God's Spirit. By tying your will into God, you are in a position to carry out your responsibility before God to govern on His behalf. Makes you count uniquely for what God is creating in the world and sustaining it.

Spirit is un-bodily, personal power. Your spirit is not bodily. That's why the learned world will not talk about 'freedom'.

* Divorce - It is rarely said, "This is because people choose to get divorced." They think in terms of causes. Causation is the only category of analysis of human life. That is why moral knowledge disappears because it has to do with the will and the character as coming out of the will. Whether or not you are a good person or a bad person, do what is right morally or do your duty, it is a matter of your choice, not a matter of causation.

* If you are going to shoot someone, you have to have a gun. There is some causation involved. You can have a gun and not shoot anyone. An action requires more than just conditions which make it possible. It requires a choice.

The category of the *spirit* is a scandal to the modern world. This is nothing less than a straight forward assault on the 1st & 2nd of the Ten Commandments. This is a world not acknowledging the presence of God.

2. God is Life Giving - John 5:26 - God gives life, sustains life [15:27]

Life is self initiating, self sustaining, self directing activity.

God is the only one who has that kind of life.

* The goldfish is alive...for now. A plant, a seed has some degree of life.

"God is in Himself a sweet society"

Before the creation of the world, God was enjoying themselves. **John 17:5**

"The glory I had with You before the world was."

Glory - power, richness, beauty of their relationship.

God is too Many to be One, and too One to be Many.

* Casual Sex is a corruption of the personality. Using "Hook up" for sex.

That's a reflection of the idea of broken personality

"Becoming one with a prostitute." (Paul)

"Casual sex" is a perversion of what a person is. I can't be that close to a person and be "casual". You get out of sexual temptation by understanding what the other person is and understanding the kind of relationship that is meant to hold between persons.

Our problem with the Trinity is not the Trinity but understanding persons.

John 17:22-26 - *"The Glory you have given me I have given them that they may be one just as we are one."*

["Glory" is a relational description.]

The Love the Father had for me before the foundations of the world. That is the nature of God - God is love.

"Love one another as I have loved you." (**Jn 13:34-35**)

Do I really want that? Smothering? "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" song. You feel a threat - how am I going to sustain myself if human relations are that tight?

Love comes from the Father, Son & Spirit into the individual with freedom.

Not a matter of Adam-ism and individualism

"I will love you forever" in marriage. We don't know how to be married

"Forever" - you can only do if God enables me to do.

* Homosexual marriage? Why not if that's all "marriage" means?

The Trinity extends its kind of love thru the redeemed community.

I Corinthians 13 - Expression of the profundity of the Trinity. Requires a person submit themselves to God and receive from Him Agape.

If you do not understand this is what love does not what you do, if will nail you to the floor. You are not going to do this. Love is. You submit yourself to "love" (to God). Love doesn't just mean desire. When the desire is gone, what is left?

When we think about the Kingdom of God, we have to understand that out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want. [26:00]

To bring out of history a community of every tongue, tribe and nation to play a major role in the future of the universe.

Ephesians 3:8-10

[26:55]

v.8 - *"Unfathomable riches of Christ of the mystery hidden in God."*

"Mystery" - Not something you can't figure out. A mystery in the New Testament is something that has been hidden and is now revealed - God's world-wide plan of redemption to include all nations & tongues.

v. 10 - *"that the manifold wisdom of God now may be made known through the church to the rulers & authorities in Heavenly places (angels)."*

Spiritual beings do not understand the greatness of God but they will understand the many sided wisdom of God thru the church to the rulers.

Ephesians 2:7, *"in order that in the ages (eons, millennia) to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*

["ages" see also **Revelation 5:22**]

This means the Church is a revelation to the universe of the greatness of God. God's ultimate intention is the Kingdom of God and human beings place in it.

[The Church - the gathered group of people living in the Kingdom of God]

I Corinthians 6:1-3 - A shocking church not able to adjudicate disagreements in the church. Let the kids make the decisions. We realize the church in the New Testament is very different from what it has become in other times. We shall "judge" angels. The judge in the Bible not just trial but also includes positions of government over the angels. (See the role of the Judge in biblical times.)

Rev. 22:5 *"Thru the ages, no light, lamp, sun...they shall reign for ever and ever."*

3. God's Ultimate Intention for Us is Unknown

[33:00]

* Streets of gold - Whoever made this Earth can turn out streets of gold without any problem. Just rearrange the elements that make up gold.

* Turning water into wine. If you made the water in the first place, you can do wine.

* Gates of pearl just needs a bigger oyster. People who are troubled by this are not long on logic, they are short on imagination, if you assume God. If you don't assume, forget it. All that is left is human beings and nature as they know it.

- The nature of the human will is never meant to run independently of God

God's ultimate intention for us is declared and stands out and that is a part of His Kingdom for us. We will move into that as time goes by.

The Kingdom of God Throughout the Bible

[36:00]

The unity of the Bible is the progressive with-ness of God's creation in His kingdom to human beings individually and in groups. [With-God Life]

* Adam & Eve - His intention to be with them. He allows Himself to hide from them. Decline to the point of sorrow for making human beings.

* Noah comes in; The destruction of created beings. New covenant established

* Isaac - God was with Isaac in such a way that goodness was revealed to such a degree that his neighbors were scared of him. He prospered to such an extent, they asked him to move away. He moved then they wanted to make a covenant with him because they saw **God was with** them. **The "with-God" principle.**

* The Tabernacle - (**Exodus 29:46**) So **God could be with** His people without destroying them. God wants to be with his people. He has to arrange the circumstances for this to come about. Now he has agree of people. He arranges a new way to be with Him - the Tabernacle.

What does that mean? Put yourself in God's position. Suppose you see this great being by presenting yourself to a person could totally destroy them. How can he be present without destroying them? Allowing them to make choices to come to a place to meet Him. They were scared of God. Remember after Sinai, the people pleaded that they did not want see God again. You speak to Him and then come to us. This is mediation. God is working out means of mediation so people could come to and go from Him. Before the Tabernacle, they had altars but this did not allow a people to come to God in a way that they could have a life together in His Kingdom.

God wants to dwell among His people. (Rev. 21: That's how the Kingdom is manifest.)

How this developed through the OT Temple, Destruction, Exile. Transfer of mediation from a building the Tabernacle to the Temple to a written Word and the Rabbinic Judaism that dominates at the time of Jesus and now it is the Torah and the rituals of family & Temple that continues the mediation today.

Christ came to break God's kingdom out of cultural captivity. The big issue in the book of Acts is whether one can be a Christian and not a Jew. Christians emerged out of Antioch of Syria in non-Jewish Gentiles which expanded its disciples from of all nations. [Is he doing that again today with the Christian Church?]

That's almost impossible for us to think today what that means. The system of mediation that had been present up to the time of Jesus was now set aside. The new system of mediation was one simple thing - Jesus. Paul says, "*There is one*

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God and one mediator the man Jesus." The whole thing is thrown open to all nations. All that is required is simply the presence of Jesus. The Kingdom is present with Him. You have Him, you have the Kingdom.

There was a hot battle for the Kingdom between Jesus & the Jews. He said things that would get him killed. Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"You compass land & sea to make one proselyte and when you got him you make him two-fold more a child of hell than you yourselves are."* (**Matthew 23-24**)

This set me on my ear as a young Southern Baptist minister. How am I bringing people into the Kingdom of God? (It may turn out you're just trying to make Southern Baptist) I had to think about how I am bringing people into the Kingdom of God. If you bring people into the Kingdom of God, that presupposes a different view of what disciple means. Frankly, there wasn't much said about being a "disciple" in that setting. That's a part of the whole idea you can be a Christian without being a disciple. *You can be a Baptist without being a disciple. I knew a lot of them.* I was clawing my way of that position myself. That's a part of realizing that God now has opened the door in a new way and taken the Kingdom of God out a strictly cultural and institutional setting and put it on the basis of a personal relationship of being with God.

We can not underestimate this. When we think about social Issues & social justice, the real issue is "loving your neighbor as yourself."

What happens if your neighbor is not one of your kind?

Colossians 3:11-14, *"No Greek, Jew, Circumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Slave, Free, but Christ is all and in all."*

Distinctions are blotted out. * Scythians are the bottom of the barrel of humanity. God's intended "with-ness" goes beyond all human barriers. Human barriers continue to be among the things that cause the most evil and grief among human beings. * Genocides * World Conflicts

The Church itself is presented as the dwelling place of God. God has designed His people as His dwelling place and that is going to continue throughout eternity.

Rev. 22 takes you to back to that.

The Problem of Meaning in Human Life

[49:50]

Life in the Kingdom of God solves that problem. Why do things matter? What do they lead to? Do they lead to anything that is of enduring worth? If things are meaningful, they carry you. "Meaningful work" is work that counts for something that makes it much easier for you to get up and do it.

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The mark of the presence of meaning in life is precisely a kind of energy and direction that makes life not something you have to carry by willpower. You're able to more joyously in a stronger way to do the things you need to do because they have meaning. They lead to something.

The Kingdom of God comes and says, "Enter the Kingdom, live in the Kingdom, allow your life to count for things that are good, permanent, enduring, lasting forever." That enables one to being to live on a different plain.

That presupposes the Kingdom is real. It is not just imaginary. As you interact with the Kingdom, that carries you, gives you strength, gives you direction and **that means power that has to be learned how to deal with.**

Lk. 11:20 - Jesus, "*If I cast out demons, know the Kingdom has come upon you.*"

* That power that is seen in His life should also be seen in the presence of His people.

* Signs & Wonders are not the gospel but they are the natural expression of the presence of the Kingdom both they are given to Christ's people to meet real needs.

Threefold Ministry of Jesus in the Kingdom

[52:30]

Matt 9:35 - Preaching, Teaching & Healing (Manifest) the Kingdom

Proclaimed - Announced, "The Kingdom is at hand." He did not bring it into existence but He proclaimed the new availability.

"The Kingdom is not in word but in power" **I Corinthians 4:20**

The capacity to do things. The Word of the Kingdom produces a kind of life or a results.

Spirit is un-bodily (non physical) personal (thoughts, feelings, will) power

It's personal - not the vague kind of "force be with you". You don't learn to manipulate it. It's not spiritual laws that you work. That's a form of idolatry. Spiritual reality is not subject to your will. This is a personal relationship. Jesus is living in a relationship to a personal reality which is the Kingdom of God. That's why we don't have mechanical results. It's a personal negotiation and a personal relationship. That gives you involvement in a meaningful life that is lived in the Kingdom of God. Your life is part of an eternal life and the results that are gained lasts for eternity.

Compared to the Secular view - Nothing & nothing. Nothing that comes of it lasts. It's all over. The sun will become a giant red ball and that's the end of the earth.

* "Tolstoy Complex" - *Confession*. After much success, it all is nothing and amounts to nothing. If you like what you do you can live on that. More than just "liking" what I do in the immediate delight of what I'm doing. Meaninglessness that lies ahead makes it hard to go on.

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* Myth of Sisyphus (Camus) - *"Roll the rock up the hill. Watch it roll down. Roll it up again."* If that view is true, so be it. We have to accept it. We can be brave, we can be tough, or as Camus suggests, commit suicide.

The presence of Jesus and His Kingdom shows this is not true.

Meaningful Life in the Kingdom of God

[57:25]

The Love and Purpose of God for us. We are embedded in His eternal life. What makes our life eternal is involvement in His eternal life.

Romans 8:28ff - *"Conformed into the image of His Son"* (v. 29)

The hard things turn to our good when we have a vision of life in the Kingdom. Even aging as the body is broken down. *"Inwardly renewed..."*

II Co. 4:16, *"outward man is perishing. Our inward man is being renewed day by day. We look not to the things that are temporal but to the eternal."*

We are carried forward by meaning. Is there drama in our lives?

"Drama" - The ups & downs of meaningful existence in the pursuit of good against opposition. Living in the eternal kingdom of God now gives us this framework.

Jesus' Teaching on the Gospel of the Kingdom

[1:00:25]

Matthew 3 - John the Baptist, *"Repent, the Kingdom of Heavens is at hand."*

Mt. 4:17 - Same message, same words from Jesus

Mt. 5 - Beatitudes - Teaching about the K. The order begins & ends with the K
The Beatitudes are basically a proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

Mt. 9:35-38 - Jesus went about preaching the Kingdom of God

Mt. 13 - Parables are stories of the Kingdom (parallel passages in Luke)

Mt. 11:12 - The transition into the Kingdom from the Jewish system. Until John the Baptist, the Law & the Prophets were proclaimed as the officially appointed doorway into the Kingdom of God. Since John the Baptist the gospel of the Kingdom is preached. [Jesus began His public ministry when John was imprisoned. He knew His was the only voice.] People came by force into the Kingdom. Kingdom followers do not stand on Jewish proprieties. (**Luke 16:16**)

They charge in.

* Leper (**Matthew 8**) *"Jesus, if you would, you could make me clean."*

Jesus touched him with a human touch. The leper bulled his way in.

* Roman Centurion (**Matthew 8**) - He understood Kingdom power

Matthew 21:43 - *The Kingdom shall be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruit of it.* That's what happened in the book of **Acts** was a description of how Mt. 21:43 was carried out. The Kingdom of God was not in the Jews' peculiar possession to make it available to the world.

John 3:5 - "To enter the Kingdom you have to be born from 'above.'" [1:07:25]
"Above" - Entry into the Kingdom is not mediated through any human institution. The whole passage as an illustration of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and how it now bypasses human institutions entirely. [Churches? Next point]

"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." **Romans 10:13**

The Church and the Kingdom [1:08:40]

The church does not omit the kingdom. The kingdom is present in the church.

Romans 14:17 - *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

What happens in the church that keeps us from being a discipling body of Christ? We are distracted. These people were distracted about eating. Paul says, "Don't worry about that." Eating comes up over and over.

When in church matters we want to understand that the Kingdom of God is manifested by a kind of righteousness or goodness, peace & joy that can only be supernaturally produced.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is the announcement that God is here that anyone who wants to find Him can come through Jesus Christ and find the Kingdom of God.

Seek the Kingdom of God [1:11:00]

Matthew 6:33 - How do you seek the Kingdom of God?

Find out what God is doing - the Kingdom - and do that.

How do you find out what God is doing?

Observe Jesus Christ. Look at Him. Listen to what He said. Watch what He did. That's what God is doing. Now do that where you are and you will find the Kingdom of God and the kind of righteousness that God has. When you find that everything else you need will be provided. *Good night, what a statement that is!*

Look at the 23rd Psalm - *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack."*

Same thing? Sure! Now we have a face on the Shepherd, a person to point to and say that's where you can find it...Jesus Christ. We can't just rest in the name. We have to move to the reality and the presence of the Kingdom.

Prayer [1:13:14]

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 3 @ 1:14:00** ~ ~ ~

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT1phEMrS7E>

I. The Substance and Essence of the Kingdom

(finishing what we were talking about)

"Kingdom" talk becomes invariably enmeshed in social and political issues. They could not conceptualize what it would be like for Jesus to be King outside of a political order. The understanding was (is) that the Kingdom will be a political, social kingdom.

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father (an actual place) and He is still here.

"Will you restore the kingdom to Israel?" **Acts 1:6** Are you going to get a government in Israel that will whip everybody? They had reason to believe if he wanted to do that he could. Think of what he could have done with his powers in terms of weapons. He knew nothing could be gained that way. He knew a human kingdom would have done nothing for the project of history that God put afoot in the Divine Conspiracy.

In the book of Acts - There's a real hermetical problem we need to address.

People think Paul & Jesus preached a different gospel. There's got to be a political kingdom.

You have to be an **ontologist** - understand "being" to understand the Scripture

The Kingdom of God (def.) is God's ruling - His governing

Jesus came to preach was not that there was a Kingdom of God. His came to make available was entry into the Kingdom of God. Everyone knew there was a Kingdom of God. They were looking for it to become a political reality where the promises of God to the Jewish nation would be fulfilled.

The Kingdom of God is the Person of God and the instrumentalities by which He rules - His Spirit, His Son, His Word, Angels, the Church - godly people

Three Kingdoms

[7:00]

Biggest threat to God's Kingdom is my kingdom & the kingdom of darkness

These 3 kingdoms are battling in human life - terrible events on Earth

Some of His actions are not things He has to attend to all the time

* Like our furniture arranged in your home expresses your will but you don't have to hold it in place.

* God's Laws - God's will is expressed in arrangements he has established in some ways by laws that are set in place. The responsibility we have as human beings is to learn those laws, how to live by them and be responsible to them for what is appropriate for good with human beings. The only thing outside of the will

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of God are rebellious human and angelic wills. Everything else conforms to the will of God.

The Kingdom of God is "not" in your heart. It is in reality and your heart is in it. It is not a political reality or a warm thought in your heart. It is God reigning, ruling.

We don't want to be sticklers about the language - to start a "Kingdom of God" denomination. Many times in the church you've had the reality of the Kingdom without the language. What is essential is not the language but the reality.

* Puritans & Pietists understood the offer in Christ to be something that included your whole life.

If you're preaching a gospel that does not mean redemption for your whole life, you haven't got the right one. [10:43]

Paul - *"Put on...[the list]. Above all things put on love which is the bond of perfection/perfectness."* - **Col. 3:1-17**

Wonderful progressions - Colossians 3, Romans 5, II Peter 1 - all culminate in Agape-the bond of perfectness

"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father in Him."

"In His Name" = Do it on His behalf from His resources. That's the reality, the vision of the Kingdom.

We don't need to get sticky about the words. We want the reality.

Trust the Kingdom of God - Kingdom of God is all inclusive. We can trust God with everything. Whatever we let Him have charge of in our lives, He will take it into the Kingdom of God. He will take care into His ruling and reigning. Matthew 6 is not "pretty", it is sober reality. You wonder could this guy possibly be real?

Matthew 6:25-34: He says, *"Don't be concerned about tomorrow. My advice to you is to just trust God. Don't worry about things...anything."* Believe He's in charge of anything you let Him be in charge of. If something happens you don't like, He'll bring good out of it. Something happens that injures you, He'll turn it into something good. You can sum it up by saying,

"This world is a perfectly safe place for you to be."

How can you say that in suffering? That's how big the Kingdom is! I am invited to take everything that pertains to me, bring it to Jesus, put it at his feet and leave it there. When you worry, you don't leave it there.

Matthew 6:25ff - "Seek 1st His kingdom". Try to price someone in "birds"
God has an order and you can trust that. Seek 1st His Kingdom means...
—> **Find out what God is doing & do it with Him.**

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I like to suggesting wordings for language that we don't commonly associate any meaning with. What meaning do we normally associate, "Seek 1st the Kingdom"? I'm suggesting this means - Find what God is doing & do it with Him.

A key to that is to look at the Law and what comes forth in Jesus

Joshua 1:8 and **Psalm 1** run parallel with Matt. 6:33 [20:50]

You might have to give up watching TV and have the Law in your mind
I think the 23rd Psalm is better than "Seinfeld"...no commercials!

By doing this [Joshua 1:8] you have aligned yourself with the Kingdom

The whole human project is to get the human being aligned with what God is doing - that's God's kingdom. Includes teaching, preaching, manifesting, dealing with demons, dealing with sickness. Doesn't mean you're always going to win. May not always go well. I don't know what'd I'd do if I never lost.

Includes driving and praying "*Hallowed by Thy Name*".

You can teach yourself to pray without ceasing. * "*Breath Prayers*".

Seek the Kingdom and everything else will be added. That's the promise of the scriptures, the reality of the Kingdom of God!

"Don't be anxious for tomorrow, it will have enough evil." Leave it (trouble) over there. Don't borrow trouble from the future because you have enough today. Turn it loose because you're living in the Kingdom of God.

That's the picture that we want.

After the Reformation, "Forgiveness of Sins" included everything. [26:10]

* "*Rock of ages cleft for me. Be of sin the double cure cleanse from wrath and make me pure."* Or, "*He breaks the power of cancelled sin."*

1. Cancel the guilt of sin

2. Redemption from the power of sin

"Breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free."

That understanding was Kingdom even though they don't use the word because it was all inclusive.

* Brother Lawrence - Practicing the presence of God = the whole life understanding Kingdom reality!

II. Paul and the Gospel - "The Riches of Christ" [28:30]

You make a disciple by ravishing people with the reality of the Kingdom

* Buy the field with the buried treasure. Do what he could to buy the field

* Pearl of great price

Once you see the Kingdom of God, you'll gladly give them up.

Once you understand who Jesus is and what it means for your life, you'll realize discipleship to Jesus is the greatest opportunity you'll have in life.

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It seems very often people who profess the name of Christ don't understand what they've been given. If you don't understand the greatness of the Kingdom, you can't preach, teach, offer the Kingdom.

Ephesians 3:8: "The unsearchable riches of Christ"

("unfathomable" - can't reach bottom)

Your God is Too Small by JB Philips. We're not thinking big enough

We have a tiny, puny Christ who doesn't compare well with others

* L. Ron Hubbard vs. Jesus

* USC Students ask, *Why are you a disciple of Jesus?*

Who else did you have in mind? Buddha, Gandhi [Mohammed]

Who is to be compared to Christ?

Everyone is following somebody. Usually 3 or 4 people. Half the time they don't know who they were. It's people we pick up along the way. People are not thinking about what is determining their lives. **"Who am I really following?"**

* Dallas Willard's grandmother - godliness & goodness

The goodness of people ordinarily is fathomable, but not Christ.

Paul's personal standing with Christ that was exceptional:

He was nurtured on Israel and the glory of the unique covenant people

He had a personal encounter with Jesus that was history making

He had special responsibility in teaching.

He was the first one who got it. He got the message of Jesus.

He was distinctive.

He understood the lowliness of Jesus as a servant.

He experienced the glorious reality of Jesus Christ post resurrection.

His family drove him out when he came back home, possibly post Arabia

He was personally tutored by Jesus Christ but not with Jesus in the flesh.

I Cor. 15:10 - Grace of God worked more effectively in Him than all

He understood the hope of God given to all the people on the Earth.

He carried the battle of the Church beyond Judaism to the Gentiles

"You can be Jesus' person without being Jewish"

What are the Riches of Christ?

1. His Riches: Physical Cosmos - at the Disposal of Christ [41:25] [CREATION]

* Carl Sagan, *The Cosmos* - "The physical cosmos is all there is"

Mark 6:35-45 Jesus manifested His power over matter
v. 41 - Gave thanks v. 45 - Walking on the water; Calmed the storm
He was the master over matter. He could actually do so
We can turn matter into energy but not energy into matter
Jesus made everything. He has power over nature.
v. 52 - *"They did not gain insight over the loaves"*
Understand who you are dealing with! He holds it all together.
* USC PhD. colleague - Water into wine heat in pots.
He could probably handle the heat.

The early apostles believed the physical cosmos belonged to Christ and was totally at His disposal because they had seen his power over nature and death. He was resurrected.

* Atheist Professor, "Resurrection - That's contrary to the laws of physics?"

Willard, "Which laws of physics?" There aren't any. Physics does not deal with reality as a whole but physical reality and even that from a particular point of view. Often in general terms that something has been found out to prove that God does not exist. Nothing has been found out that has disproved the reality of God. Show me where in the science book it shows.

We have to keep that in mind. When we are talking about the Kingdom of God, we have to know we are talking about reality. It is a field of energy and it does work. The Word that God spoke is power beyond any comprehension and that power is still working.

2. His Riches: the Master of the Moral Life [54:10] [CHARACTER: GOODNESS - VIRTUE - RIGHTEOUSNESS]

Jesus understands moral reality and order and able to bring people to moral goodness. He doesn't just talk about it, He knows how it works.

Matthew 5:20 - *"Unless you exceed Pharisees righteousness, you can't make contact with the Kingdom of the Heavens."*

All the parts of the self being permeated with agape love - body, soul, social relations, mind (thoughts/feelings), your will all set in love. To do that you'll have to be in touch with something that enables you to do it. If you're not going to move to that level, you can't contact what will enable you to do it. This needs the power of agape in you

Scribes & Pharisees - Not what you do, or more importantly, what you don't do
Thou Shall not Kill - "Sex & Violence" addressed by Jesus

Anger & Contempt - Why did Jesus start there? Because He knew anger & contempt are the root of murder. Be careful whom you "dis".

Language used to kill - "I wasted them" - contempt for someone

Jesus understands it is rooted in self will that is thwarted & frustrated gives rise to murderous rage. Instead of not killing people, let's talk about not being governed by anger - the root of the situation. That's why Jesus is the master of the moral world.

* If you're going to the right destination (airport), all will be taken care of
If you don't have the wrong stuff on the inside, you don't have to worry about not killing someone. You're not that kind of person.

James - *"If you hate your brother, you already are a murderer in your heart"*
You want to get the murder out of the heart.

Adultery

[1:00:50]

Not in to cultivating lusting, you won't be in trouble with adultery

Thought, Temptation & Deed

You don't try to **not** do what is wrong

You don't go there because (deed) because your not in Temptation

To stay out of temptation, you have to deal with the heart

Plato, Aristotle, Epicureans - *How to Lead a Good Life, Be a Good Person*

The early thinkers totally failed on bringing people to moral goodness.

Republic - One of the most beautiful books. The study of the human soul

How can we train people so their soul works as it should?

The good person is one w/the balanced soul - Reason, Appetites & Emotion

"When emotions align with reason to govern the appetites"

Educate the people who are able to reason to get emotions in order to handle the appetites.

Aristotle - **Legislation**: Organized government to establish institutions that will shape souls that are good. It didn't work. Greeks invited the Romans in to stop killing one another.

~ Epicureans striving to get a hold of moral reality but they could not.

That's why the Christian teaching of Christians won the hearts of the ancient world. Presented the beauty of Christ and the goodness of Christ and showed people to actually do it.

Moral education is a not entity. In High School, kids hit a moral wilderness or a moral sewer and nothing is taught to them except a brand of secular legalism.

The track record of the Christian church makes clear the way of being a genuine person by following the way of Christ and His teachings.

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If you had a pill to remove unkindness, would you take it?
If there was an operation to remove your anger, would you do it?
Operation to make it impossible to lie?

Jesus Christ stands for a purity of life that most people would be hesitant to embrace.

* Business Ethics is not business ethics but how to stay out of trouble.

The one thing you will not see teaching on how I can use my professional status to be a good person. That's really the only issue. If you're not interested in being a good person, when the pressure comes down, you'll be able to find ways of avoiding the regulations. The failure that's implicit in all forms of legalism.

Jesus knew that. That's why Jesus doesn't deal with actions. He understands the order in the moral life and you have to bring people to moral goodness through repentance for what they have done.

* 12 Steps - Confession, Forgiveness & Repentance

The church should have been helping but could not help AA because of it was caught up in self righteousness. They did not want to deal with people who were dealing with alcohol. What about the people Jesus hung out with?

What about the people hung out with? Many churches in America have gone down the drain because their neighborhood has changed and they don't want to minister to the people living right under their windows. There are plenty of people to fill the churches. If all the churches & synagogues were filled, we'd reach 3-5%. We're not short on people in need. We need to minister to the ones who are there. That was Jesus' way. He didn't sort out saying this is not the kind that we want. He took people where they were. That was part of his moral vision and that's why people were drawn to Him. ["You're just like me but you're on to something"]

3. His Riches: Glorious Future of the Individual Human [1:13:25]

[CALLING]

Luke 12 (Matthew 6)

Phil 4:6ff - *"Anxious for nothing...Let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God will set a guard around your hearts and minds...Peace beyond understanding."*

"What you seen in me, do those things & the God of peace will be with you"

Mt. 18:10 - Caring Provision - God assigns angels to attend to each child

He has individuals to see to it that they are cared for in the Kingdom of God, this side of death or the other. He not only takes care of sparrows, he takes care of children. How can this be when you see what happens to them in this world? No matter what happens to them in this world, the goodness of God sees to it that those children continue to exist in conditions that makes them thankful to no matter what happens to them. You have to go beyond death.

John 8:51-52 - Freedom from **Death**

Are the riches of Christ so great to include that?

The Gold Cord by Amy Carmichael [1:18:30-1:21:50]

"Three Tender Mercies"

* Story of a Lala - a child's joyous passing

What's **death** going to be like?

You won't know that you have died until much later

If you're planning on seeing death give up. You won't.

That is the basis upon which the early church understood Jesus had abolished death.

II Timothy 1:10 - Jesus destroyed death and brought life & immortality

4. His Riches - The Future of the Created Cosmos [CAPACITY] [1:23:45]

The incredible beauty and greatness of the cosmos will never pass away. It is not a self contained system. It is sustained by the power of God. Astronomers tell us that 92%+/- is cold, dark, matter. They have no reason to believe in dark matter except it will explain how the Universe that is visible, warm, light matter behaves. The truth is we know almost nothing about the ultimate nature of the physical universe. I want to suggest to you that the cold, dark matter which explains the behavior of the physical universe is actually God. This is the Jesus who upholds all things by the word of His power.

You say, "How do you know that?" I'm open to anything that can be scientifically demonstrated. We have to go at it through the laws that can be discerned from the behavior of the things we can observe. No one is able to explain why we have the laws we do. Any cosmologist will tell you that. If they can explain the laws we do have, they would never be able explain the origin or the initial condition in which the laws begin to apply.

The greatness and beauty and the future of the Universe is secure and it will get greater and greater. I say that because I believe in the God who made the Universe because He has intruded on this Universe in the form of Jesus Christ. There will be a New Heaven and New Earth and New Jerusalem (**Rev. 21**). The one we have is in pretty bad shape. Look at Revelation 21 and following.

The Ultimate Questions that face Human Beings [1:27:50]

[Session 6 - 17:50ff (p. 54) Session 7 - Q's #1-3 - 0:00-34:00 (p. 60)]

#1 - What is Reality?

Knowledge and truth help us come to terms with reality. Being Christ's people means we affirm the reality of the Kingdom of God. What is reality?

Answer - **God and everything that comes from His hand.**

#2 - Who is well off? Who has the good life? Who is Blessed?

Answer - **Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God.**

What about the poor? He said Blessed are the poor, for they too can have the Kingdom of God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, people who have no religion going for them. They are poor in spirit like His apostles. He chose people like that to make His messengers to the world. It is certainly because He did not want anyone to take a human fix from the world. He wanted people to understand the cure for the world is life in the Kingdom of God.

#3 - Who is a really Good Person?

Answer - **Anyone permeated with agape love**

Love is comes forward out of the nature of God, brought to human beings, Christ shows you how to realize it, what it is and then finally...

#4 - How do you become a really good person?

Answer - **Becoming a disciple of Jesus**

Jesus answers each of these far superior than anyone else. Just compare.

* Peter, "To whom shall we go?" (That is a real question isn't it.)

People in LA, Manilla, Bombay have the exact same questions.

How does Christ compare to Krishna? Buddha? L. Ron Hubbard?

Our Task - Preach the Unsearchable Riches of Jesus [1:32:15]

One Mistake we can make? Fail to present Jesus Christ adequately.

If we present Jesus adequately, what can be done for human beings will be done. If not, he is an early advocate for the Democratic way of life. He is a gentle cynic of the Jesus Seminar. If he is just a sacrifice for sin, you will also fail to present the **Unsearchable Riches of Christ**. Except in a world which is keyed to the issue of the forgiveness of sins, the message you present will fail to make disciples.

Does the gospel I preach have a natural tendency to produce disciples to Jesus Christ or does it just produce more consumers of religious goods and services? [1:34:05]

We have a nonparticipant spectator, consumer version of Christianity in this country. That's why people go from church to church to find a better service to consume. Not rooted in the body of Christ. Not focused on discipleship and personal transformation. Not focused on living in the power of God in a way that you can bring to bear where you can stand as Christ's person and expect the Kingdom of God to make a difference you yourself could never make if your life depended upon it. [1:35:00]

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You have to start with ground zero planning. We have to think about the job to be done without regard to the people who are already on the grounds and looking out for them to make sure they turn out right.

What is the Job to be Done? - The Great Commission [1:37:00]

They had really taken a beating. They hitched their wagon to a star and their star went and He got himself crucified. The word was out on them. They had been hiding in the bushes. He has his last meeting with them. He says,

"I have been given say over everything over Heaven and Earth."

That's Kingship.

"As you go, make disciples." We're talking about "Ground Zero Planning".

1) The first thing we are going to do is to make disciples.

2) As we make disciples, they are going to be brought into the Trinitarian presence. Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Immerse them in the Trinitarian reality. When these disciples come together what's happening is not a program they are putting on. They are not doing a performance. They are watching for the hand of God to move in their midst.

3) Last Stage - Teach them to do everything Jesus said.

He book ends it with "I am with you every minute until the job is done."

Starts with "I have say over everything." Ends with, "I am with you every minute." What lies between is the plan. This is Jesus plan for Church growth. The most successful plan for any growth

[1:39:30]

If we preach the unsearchable riches of Christ rightly, we are ready to move into that plan. If we do not, we can never go there and we will have to do something else. That is the history of the church, very largely doing something else. You go down through the ages and watch the ebb and the flow and you come up to the present and say what are we doing today.

Other Perspectives of Reality

[1:40:30]

Buddhism - It's escaping the wheel of birth and death. You would stop existing and never come back. You cease to exist as an independently existing thing. It's not a life affirming teaching, it's a life denying teaching. Object is to escape desire. How you escape desire is the question. This is an awful place. The world is an illusion. You are an illusion. Compare Buddhism at its best with Christian culture at it's best. All at their worst are equally bad at the worst end. Look at the good end and they not equally good. Compare what Christ has been and He is far above the others. If I'm wrong show me.

Evidence

[1:44:20]

- 1) Reality of Christ both before and after His resurrection.
- 2) The reality of the Kingdom as experimentally known through finding what God is doing, on that assumption getting involved and see what the reality of it is.

[1:46:15]

If you can find a better way, he would be the first to say to you, "take it." If you don't believe that, you can't follow two steps. You know that he is on the side of truth, what is established, what's reason, what is factual.

The secular system knows they have no way to prove that they have an authority to get away with it. Carl Sagan's series has all these falsehoods in it, unfounded claims.

We need ordinary people to do this. Just follow the argument. God is on your side.

We have all these uneducated people with higher degrees. That has to do with the authority structure we live in. It has nothing to do with Truth and Knowledge. Listen to Phil Johnson at Berkeley. There are specialists who are doing the work.

[1:50:10]

Do the work as a Christian. Follow out the teachings of your Scripture because your Scripture is a profound book of knowledge. If you treat it as a book where you go to prove that your traditions are right, you'll come back empty. Frankly most of our traditions have no foundation, they are just stuff that has grown up. "The vain traditions of our fathers." (Peter)

Most of our denominations were born out of negativity - Protestants. You're known for protesting. Get to Heaven and say, "God, I protested!"

Go to the scriptures to see what is positively taught about life and reality and put it to the test. That gets us back to "Ground Zero planning". Now we're going to do something **following Jesus Christ as if there was no one already there that had to be justified for what they are doing.**

*** The Educational System**

[1:51:40]

If you set out to devise an educational system, you would never come up with the one we've got. This is not "Ground Zero Planning". The main thing you have to do is to take care of people who are already in the game.

You can't go at Christianity that way. If you'll do your ground zero planning, it will do the best thing you can for the people who (Christians) are already in the game. Many are good people, sincere people who want to follow Christ. But they are hindered by taking care of a lot of stuff that is irrelevant.

The one of beauties of the Great commission is that it strips all of that away.

What are you going to do? Just do what it says!

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 4 - 1:53:00** ~ ~ ~

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd3A3AfmM5Q>

The Central Issue of our Work - *What is Salvation?*

1.) Public Appearance of Salvation to All

Titus 2:11-3:7 (ASV) *"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*

Being lost is not where you are going, it is where you are. A lost person does not know where they are. Can not locate where you are on a map. This is condition of lostness.

4 *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Titus 2:11-3:7 is a good picture of what salvation means in the New Testament.

Emphasis on New Life - Regeneration; to be "Born from above"

Life is a kind of activity that is self initiating, self directing from the inside.

Life in Christ is a new kind of activity where Jesus is Lord

2.) A New Life

[5:25]

Life comes from the inside

[6:25] Acknowledging Jesus is Lord by the Holy Spirit - I Co. 12:2 (?)

He is in charge of the Universe. He is the Maestro of life. He has power to supervise & govern in His kingdom.

To really see that you can not do this on your own but from God. Faith is a gift of God not our own. This new project will eliminate boasting. No pride in this new life. Everything good has been given to us. We have to work through this carefully.

One of the reasons we are in this non-Disciple Christianity: We have mistaken grace for passivity.

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Come to your church and say, "Do it to me". "Thrill me with your worship service. Enliven me with your word. I'm here to consume. So you lay the goods on the table. If you don't, I'll go elsewhere where they lay better goods on the table."

The passivity has generated a culture of consumer Christians. Being a Christian is a matter of consuming. They consume the merits of Christ. They consume services. They consume ministers.

They think their job is to consume. They don't realize they are called to participate so they can live the new life out.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God & Discipleship to Christ [09:30]

Universal assumption is that you can be a Christian without being a Disciple.

There is no church that says, "You can't be a Christian without being a Disciple."

* In School, you don't have to believe what you write. Can be right even if you guess. Even true in seminary. Is that true in our churches?

The Church doesn't need more people, \$, influence, education. Never. The basic need is for the transformation of the people who are there. Our problem is the quality of the people who are there.

* In my early ministry I realized I was not really helping people to change. It's not their fault. Southern Baptist can't get saved again but they can rededicate themselves. It slowly dawned on me I'm not saying anything to help these people change.

What are we teaching people that leaves us in this situation?

Is "Lordship" in practice not just a doctrine? Am I saying, "I am His disciple"?

The Loss of the Meaning of "Disciple" [15:30]

A. Discipleship Confused with Evangelism

"Spiritual Formation" arose because disciple became flabby & displaced.

* Navigators as the most recognized "Discipling" Ministry formerly stated:
"Christians are in three classes"

1. Just Christians

2. Disciples - People who could make Christians - Soul winners

3. Workers - People who could make Disciples

{*"I don't have time to tell you all the things I don't mean by that."*}

Navigators realized they were producing people who were not Christlike.

True Disciple - Full time student in the Kingdom of God

B. Discipleship Confused with Social Action

* Sojourners Magazine - Service to the Poor, Political Action, Protesting, Government Opposition = "*Speaking truth to power*"

C. Discipleship Confused with Church Involvement [21:55]

These don't come to transformation into Christlikeness to be what it's supposed to be and do what the church is supposed to do transformation of people in the world coming to Christlikeness...people progressing to the place where they routinely and easily do the things Jesus talked about.

*** I like to say, People who are "Blessing those who curse (dis) you."**

We're not making an issue of actually doing what Jesus said. Most of our groups have an emphasis on particular things Jesus said but not all of them.

—> **The Great Commission - Three Parts** [24:25]

Part 1 - Make Disciples in the Gospel of the Kingdom

[["Church Priority #2 - Means to Make Disciples"](#) Session 9 @ 1:05:15 (p. 81)]

A.) The first step is for us to **Be a Disciple - FOLLOW Jesus**

So important for us to know what a "Disciple" is. If we are going to make disciples, surely the first step is to be a disciple. That step if we omit that, nothing else will go quite right. We will have people not committed to learning.

* Commit to Learning a class like Algebra [don't commit, won't learn]

Get people to the place where they see what is presented as "The Pearl of Great Price", "Treasure in the Field" so they will say Yes this is the most important thing and "Seek First the Kingdom of God".

Imagine groups of people [families] who acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus where the whole purpose was to learn from Him. You have people who are ready for a different kind of operation to go on around them.

* A student who really wants to learn Algebra will do it and learn it.

B.) Make Disciples is to **Form Intentions - FUEL Obedience to Jesus**

* You can learn how to spell C-A-T. Being able to bless people who curse you is just like that. If you don't do the things that will bring you there if you don't do them. You will not learn how to spell "C-A-T" by grace.

Grace will not force you to "easily & routinely" do what Jesus says.

[[Grace invites not demands](#)]

—>This is fundamental truth about this whole business of discipleship. [29:45]

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If I am not a person who easily and routinely turns away from [sin], it isn't because of the law of gravity. It is because I don't intend to become that kind of person.

Serious Call to a Devout & Holy Life by William Law, Ch. 2 [30:45]

This is the missing link. When we are talking about making disciples, we are talking about making people who actually **intend** to do it.

* Algebra class - you should intend to learn how to solve equations

Algebra students - They don't know what they are there for.

"Just give me the units" and that's why they do so badly

* In our culture (USC), we have group therapy for Math Phobia
If you just want the job, the grade, you don't want to learn it.

The key is generating intention - and that is what Discipleship is about

C. Make Disciples by ravishing them with the Kingdom - **FOCUS on Jesus**

It's amazing how little we hear about Jesus in our churches. Help them understand about **the greatness of Jesus** and what He is doing. He is often presented in a very narrow perspective. He is just Savior & Judge. Present Christ. Lift Him up in all of His glory and with Him the Kingdom comes because **He is a great King**.

"The Unfathomable Riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8)

Go to people and ask them, *"How are you doing with your kingdom?"*

Help them be responsible for their lives. Help them understand who Jesus is. Self will is not bad until we exalt it to the top position. We all have a Kingdom that we bring with us to each moment and gathering

* Breakdown of kingdoms in families

"Hearts of Fathers to Children" [37:10]

These are kingdoms that are broken. Then we bring people to Jesus and see life in His Kingdom. That's how we make disciples.

"Look, this is your greatest opportunity in life."

Part 2 - Immerse Disciples in the Trinity [38:00]

—> Church services are a primary problem in this whole project

Getting nice people together in a building seated in rows and talking to them was working. Now what do we do?

Then a whole new groups started up - Calvary Chapel, Vineyard, etc.

The problem of discipleship remains an issue across the board.

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The temptation to program differently we need to avoid.
Focus on the 2nd clause in the Great Commission is the key - the Trinity
Get off the focus on the program and performance
Doesn't matter much what you do by way of programming
As long as you honor the Trinity, the Trinity will come.

You have to have Disciples who honor Jesus as Lord. Prepared to love one another; Invoking the presence of God over the whole thing. It will happen. It has happened in church history.

The fact that God blesses something does not mean He approves it entirely.

Part 3 - Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded [43:25]

If you have Disciples living in the presence of the Trinitarian life that flows in community of disciples of Jesus, then you can now teach them to do everything Jesus said. That is how discipleship in the gospel of the Kingdom comes together.

If you don't preach a whole life gospel or you'll never make disciples.

I use the word "Kingdom". Don't be legalistic about the language.

The point - Living now within the range of God's effective will in our whole life not religious things we do that and non-religious we do on our own.

Discipleship: Move from running our own Kingdom and bringing increasingly our whole self into the kingdom of God often one step & part at a time

* Heart, Mind, Body, Emotions, Social & Soul

[FOLLOW ("Make Disciples") - THREE ("Immerse") - ACT ("Obey")]

—> **What is a Disciple?** [2 key questions] [45:40]

1.) A Disciple is one who is with Jesus and learning to be like Him

Prepared to invoke Him, invite Him and as you do that, you are going to experience His presence but not in our own strength. Discipleship is not something to be done merely by Human effort but one living in the Trinitarian presence. That is the meaning of the teaching of grace we receive from the Scriptures. Grace means we can't do that on your own. You don't have to. We are with Jesus. We experiencing Him acting with us.

* Carrying a log on our own when someone else carries it with you.

[* Spotting in weight lifting = grace]

We are constantly tempted to do things we can not do. That is standard with the life of grace. The fact that you can not do something has nothing to do with the case. The question is, "Does God want it done?" Will I start lifting it knowing I can't on lift it on my own and start lifting.

Isaiah 63:12, "God's glorious arm went at the right hand of Moses."

Moses learned baby lessons by the bush:

- * Staff to Snake - Picking up serpents is a challenge to your faith
- * Leprosy/Clean - We are with Jesus learning to do things.

2.) A disciple is interactive with Jesus. [51:15]

"Now this is eternal life: that they would know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." **John 17:3**

"Knowing" always refers to interactive relationship.

I never go into a situation where I assume I'm in control of the outcome.

If I have to do something that I can't do, I won't assume it can't be done. If I think know what's supposed to happen, I don't think that it will happen that way. I try to never assume what will happen. Sometimes I assert my Kingdom when I start acting like I'm in charge. It would be very foolish of me to assume I know what's supposed to happen. I have ideas, hopes and plans that are always held in abeyance with the idea that Jesus knows what supposed to happen. [53:20]

I am very hopeful a lot of things happen that I don't even think about.

Ephesians 3:20,

"Exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask or think..."

3.) A Disciple lets Him lead. [54:20]

I'm learning from Him how to lead my life as He would lead my life if He were I. My life is the interest here. He led His life. Now I lead my life. I have to get concrete about that. The very kind of person I am is my life. Jesus could lead it.

- * Jesus leading a lady's life. He could do that.
- * Lawyers & Bankers are hardest to help think Jesus could do their role.

Any work that is important for others can be done in a spirit of love and in the power of the Kingdom. I'm an Apprentice in Kingdom Living.

He is the Master of living in the Kingdom. It's the easy way of living.

Learn of me. (**Matthew 11:28-30**)

- * Yoke with a young horse and experienced horse.
- * "They don't pay us to live, they pay us to preach."
Held to performance.

What Jesus is talking about is transformation!

—> **The Gospel heard does not produce Disciples** [1:00:40]

Where is the problem? The central problem is the message preached or at least the one that is heard. The message they hear about the Kingdom of God is about going to Heaven when they die. It's a real feat to succeed in getting through. The message heard does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples.

~ **"Lordship Salvation"** (John MacArthur) does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples either. (*The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 2)

The bitter truth - your system is perfectly designed to produce the result you are getting. If you want a different result, you have to change the system. We have to find a place of change.

~ **"Non-Lordship Salvation"** (Charles Ryrie in response to MacArthur) "The issue is - How can my sins be forgiven? "Eternal life" means "Heaven when I die." *"The answer is sin."* (He doesn't mean "sin", he means "guilt".)

The issue - Does Jesus remove sin and/or guilt. Some say removes only guilt.

"Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil." (Matthew) Is that just guilt?

"He came to save people from their sins." (Not from guilt.) Ryrie means guilt.

[Grace is the power for not just for past guilt of sin but present grip of sin.]

"I can be fully assured of going to Heaven." (Ryrie)

Ryrie separates issues of Christian life from Salvation. (p. 74) You can reject the issues of Christian life (teaching) and still be saved (atonement).

"His death paid for all your sins is the way the gospel is often presented is just one theory of the atonement that by "Believing" taps His resources in the bank of Heaven to transfer His merit so your debts are paid off. Ryrie says, "When one believes, He commits his eternal destiny to God not his years of life on Earth. I do not need to settle issues that belong to Christian living in order to be saved."

Ryrie is driven by "Salvation by Grace". When he thinks about this life, he thinks "works".

- This is where Lordship Salvation and non-Lordship salvation join the issues.

—> **Gospels Heard Today in Churches (4)** [1:10:20]

1. Forgiveness Centered (Ryrie)

Good news is entirely about forgiveness. The beating you deserve is taken by someone else. If you believe it has, then you won't get that beating. Your sins will be forgiven and you'll be in Heaven because they won't find a reason to keep you out if you believe Jesus suffered your payment.

This is the standard version of the gospel you will hear.

* Charles Stanley, Rogers - Bellview, Memphis

It leaves people unconnected to Christian living.

Reformed Tradition - You'll be so grateful, you'll obey. But they don't

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- Forgiveness received in Luther & Calvin's days was such a huge issue, when people received it, their lives were totally transformed. That would be wonderful if it did happen but it just doesn't happen because of the way things have developed up to the present point.

2. Liberation Centered

Jesus died to liberate the oppressed and you can stand with Him in the battle. They don't say much about anything about forgiveness of sins. * *Sojourners Magazine* -

Is oppression bad? Did Jesus talk about oppression? He sure did.

Is forgiveness essential? Yes, it sure is. Reconciliation & Justification.

[Dallas Willard's view] In my own view I think it is right to think REGENERATION comes first, then JUSTIFICATION, then SANCTIFICATION, then GLORIFICATION. A natural progression along a continuous line. The way it is often presented now is that Justification is the whole deal, no one makes much sense of regeneration and there is no natural progression to sanctification because of the way it is presented.

3. Church Centered Gospel

Do what your church says and it will see to it you will be received by God

* Sacramental Churches present this gospel. Rituals, etc.

That is looking more to heaven when you die.

As you think about it, it has to be scriptural. Where do we get knowledge? Scripture is the place that God has deposited in public way the knowledge we need to have eternal life...and I don't mean go to Heaven when we die. That will take care of itself.

These are all Gospels of **Sin Management** - what are you going to do about sin - they are not gospels of REGENERATION and new life now in the present Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Heavens under the living Lord Jesus Christ.

It is often presented if we had never sinned we would have no use for Christ.

GRACE - Is the gospel only what to do about sin? Grace is often taught as only for guilt. This misunderstands Grace. Go to your Bibles for a thorough, inductive study of grace.

You have to think of yourself in presenting Christ to the world,
is it primarily about what to do about sin?

4. True Gospel

Put your confidence in Jesus and live with Him as His disciple now in the present Kingdom of God.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 5 [1:18:56]** ~ ~ ~

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upDQ6uk34u4>

What is the Gospel? You can trust Jesus!

Not something he said about social evils. Not something he did to secure your forgiveness. That's all in there. The gospel is Jesus. His availability. Put your confidence in Him. Come under the rule of God at work in your life. All of us have this in bits and pieces. There is a coherent whole of finding our life in the Kingdom

Matthew 4:17, 6:33

Romans 8:1-14 - *"Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit"*

Is this imputed righteousness [law is paid off by Jesus] or also imparted?
Romans 8 is not talking about forgiveness of sin but about life.

It contrasts the life of the flesh vs. the life of the Spirit

v. 5 - they that live in "terms of" (according to) the flesh

Flesh what you can do in your own natural abilities = expect outcome from natural sources.

"Set their minds on the things of the flesh (natural)." Outcome is death.

"Set the minds on the things of the Spirit." Outcome is life & peace.

John 3:16 is not about forgiveness. It includes forgiveness but it is about life from above. Not what happens after you die but what happens while you are alive. The life you lead will be an eternal one. What you do will be of the Spirit so they will not be perishing. The mind of the flesh is death.

If God did not exist, would our church be anything different?

If it is a human operation, the answer is it would not be.

Salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on Earth. Of course that involves forgiveness & Heaven afterwards. It is not a question of omitting those, it is a question of making that the whole deal.

Col. 3:1-4 - *"If you then be risen with Christ (participating in the life Jesus is now living on Earth)...seek those things above (above means where God is acting in the 1st Heaven)...you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God"*. Bring that together with the them of *The Divine Conspiracy* because this is a hidden life.

John 3 - The hidden life will manifest in great transformations, not just of character, but signs & wonders. The onlooker will not know what is going on. That's what Jesus said to Nicodemus...*the wind blows but you don't see it*. Here is the crucial point to understanding the divine conspiracy. A person who wants to explain them in some other way will do that to their satisfaction. That is a part of what God has in mind with the whole process of things here on earth - to allow people who wish to go another way. To allow those who wish to find Him can find Him.

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"But those who seek with all their hearts will find me." (Jer. 29:13) [Pr. 8:17]
God is present in you the people of Christ. Salvation - what we are a part of is now there for anyone who wishes to seek and find it.

* Bill Craig: Power Evangelism & Power Healing - critique of John Wimber [9:30]
Praying for a sick woman in his congregation

We are participating in a life that really moves with us. That's what we are learning as disciples. Faith in Jesus means that we have confidence in Him for everything.

Not just his social teachings or that He hates people who are rich.

Not just something He did, even suffering for us. That is not discipleship.

Faith in Jesus the whole person. I have confidence in Him for everything.

Everything He said about life and death is correct. Life, death, everything in life.

Discipleship is not bad news.

Someone says, "I understand you have to give up everything. Hate your mother, father...your own life." Sounds awful, doesn't it? That's the other side of the parable of the pearl of great price. You have to count the cost to be a disciple. You don't just look at what you pay. You also look at what you get.

* Buying a car - count the cost, not just what you pay but what you get and what you pay and what will happen if you don't buy the car.

The Cost of Discipleship - No-one knows the cost of discipleship who does not understand the cost of non-discipleship. How about you writing a book on *The Cost of Non-Discipleship*? Spend the rest of your life being dominated by hatred and lust. Does that sound good? If you have your wits about you, you'll realize that's worth getting rid of. How about living a life full of love, joy, hope, peace, confidence in God. If you don't have discipleship, you don't get that.

What is the Gospel?

[16:55]

The good news that we can live now in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ means I have confidence in Him for everything. I want to be as close to him as possible and learn from Him everything I can. I do believe that all of His commandments are for my benefit. Anything He tells me to do is for my good. I will be much better off when I do it.

—> You can only understand that if you get the background of the Kingdom.

The Ultimate Questions that Face Human Beings

[17:50]

[Session 4 1:27:50-1:37:00 (p.40) Q's #1-3 - Session 7 0:00-34:00 (p. 60)]

1. What is reality?
2. Who is well off?
3. Who is a good person?
4. How do you become a good person?

This is a framework for genuine witnessing for Christ. If you want to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, bring these questions to the minds of people. That's what all the philosophers and thinkers tried to answer through the ages. That's what we want to keep before the people we teach in our fellowship and that's what we want to bring to the people not in our fellowship in the witness of the Kingdom.

Why don't we hear the gospel of the kingdom? [19:15]

"I honestly can not remember any pastor preaching a sermon on the Kingdom of God. I myself have never preached a sermon on it. Where has the kingdom been?" Peter Wagner (The Divine Conspiracy, p. 59)

The Kingdom - Emphasis on whole life involvement with Jesus as Lord.

Areas of Discipleship (3) [22:10]

We have to developed this later [See Session 9 1:05:15]

#1 - Learning to do what Jesus said.

- Becoming the kind of person who would naturally do them. The focus is on changing the stuff that is in those Circles of a Whole Person. [6 Dimensions]

* Blessing those who curse you. The stuff inside always pops out before you have time to think before you know what you are doing. The Pharisee aims at the action not what's insider the person. These are guidelines to become the kind of person Jesus talks about.

#2 - How to live life in the areas without explicit command

We need guidance to learn to hear the voice of Christ, listen for it and learn to follow. Do the particular work we do with Jesus at our side and to hear his prompting and direction so that life as a whole is lived in the Kingdom includes areas of prudence as well as morality. *"What is the wise thing to do?"*

Colossians 3:16 - The Wisdom of Christ - Word of Christ in all wisdom Include our business decisions, family financial welfare, all kinds of concerns that have to do with ordinary life that we might not think about with the Bible alone.

#3 - How to act with the power in the Kingdom.

Prayer and Giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life.

We ought always to be undertaking things we can not do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. Always be counting on God to do big things, things we can not do.

* Writing a book or starting a business. Acting in the power of God!

Why is the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom omitted?

What issue comes up - Jesus preached one gospel and Paul preached another.

{Willard} "There is no such difference." The gospel Jesus preached and the gospel Paul preached are the same. Walk through the book of Acts and watch how the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus come together. You will see them separate at the beginning and together at the end.

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Acts put a face to the Kingdom and a Kingdom to the face.

People did not know what Jesus was talking about when He talked about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:3 - Jesus spoke of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12 - Phillip in Samaria preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. When you invoke the name of Jesus, you can invoke the action of the Kingdom. That's what they had to learn - When you ask and act in the name of Jesus, the Kingdom comes into action.

Colossians 3:17 - "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The name of Jesus ties into Kingdom.

At the end of Acts when Jesus & the Kingdom come together, the face of Jesus has been put on the Kingdom and a Kingdom is presented in terms of the King Jesus. A King always brings a kingdom, so they come together.

—> Spirituality without Ontology produces Legalism [33:15]

Ontology (def.) "*The theory of being; the understanding of reality.*"

It applies not just to God but also to us human beings. What matters in us is the hidden aspect - the sources of our behavior. We are spiritual beings. That's ontology. When we get the ontology right and the order right in the person, then we are able to escape legalism - Pharisaism. That's why religious people are often so angry and can be very mean. They are focusing on behavior - on faith and practices and they are judging themselves and everyone else in terms of it. It produces mean and contentious Christians. This comes from the insistence on behavior and right and wrong. Inquisitions, Wars, etc. They try to understand spirituality in terms of explicit behavior or faith in practice or explicit belief.

If we come to Jesus, we have to have beliefs about Him. The significance of the belief is not so that we will be identified with having the right answers.

* Like a Driver's test. Miss it and you don't drive (Go to Hell)

The significance of faith is not right answers,
it is being enmeshed in the reality of truth.

* Virgin Birth of Christ significance?

- Not right answer but a different world if he was born of one or not, you're going relate to Him in a different way.

* Was Christ Divine? - God will let me in if I have the right answer. The right answer is not what matters. If I believe that Jesus was uniquely divine, I relate to Him differently than if I relate to Him as a nice man who had historical significance and we ought to be like him.

My belief is designed to integrate my action with reality. That's why it really matters. We seek the Kingdom in Jesus, we come to Him, we began to listen to Him. If the Holy Spirit works the faith in our heart, we say,

"*This is the Son of God. This is equal with God.*"

Now we have a person that we relate differently. We come to seek the Kingdom in Jesus and live out the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and live in uncompromising obedience.

Do we have to be perfect? No. Why? We are met accepted on the basis of perfection or performing. We are accepted because our relationship with Jesus. When I go to Heaven, they are not going to check the computer to see if all my sins have been paid for. They will see another friend of Jesus. Disciple is not the level of their perfection. They are learning and progressing and before very long, they are ver different because their inner being is being transferred.

The Inversion of the Two Kingdoms

[39:30]

The New Testament calls it "the World".

Early followers disowned the World, the Flesh & the Devil.

[Ephesians 2, I John - Eyes, Flesh & Pride; Eve in the Garden of Eden]

The World - Socially organized flesh superintended by the prince of this world Satan whose primary job is to direct the ideas of this world that people are controlled by a false system of belief. One of the primary components is the way people are ranked.

* "Pecking order of chickens" - ranking who is up and who is down

* Children on a playground - heartbreaking to see it. One of the most brutal places in the world is playgrounds in schools. AS you grow up, you get hardened to it. This is where contempt comes in because contempt is tied to the rankings.

Jesus is especially conscious of this and how it is tied to theology. How human rankings are identified with God's rankings. Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of Human ideas about rank. God has a different ranking. "*First, last. Last, first.*" What human beings regard as good, respectable, decent, to be applauded and the people who wind up in those places as being well off, to be good, to be respected. If you are in those good rankings, that means God is on your side. One of the biggest rankings is wealth & social influence, and the right qualifications.

Philippians 3:4-6 - Again, Paul was one of the first who "got it."

Paul was "rich in spirit" (unlike the Beatitude "Poor in spirit".)

If you don't have those things, you are a "nobody". You don't exist.

All of upscale things that put me in the pecking order are all loss

* Much worse than rubbish. It's "dog stuff" you step in on the lawn.

You can have all and not be blessed or be blessed and have none.

The things that are up do not guarantee blessedness.

What guarantees blessedness is life in the Kingdom of God.

Inversions - Luke 6, Song of Miriam, Hannah's Celebration, Mary's Magnificat
[51:20] *"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God."*

Luke 6:20

Jesus did not say it was easier for poor people to get in. He does not say if your rich you can not get in. How difficult to enter if you are rich, not you can get in if you're poor. He took on, "If you are rich, you are in with God."

Jesus says if you're in the Kingdom of God, you are blessed even though you are in those positions. You are equally blessed. You don't suffer by comparison. Is He saying everyone who is poor are saved and going to Heaven when they die? No. Poor people can be just as wicked as rich people. They trust wealth more than rich people because they think it can get you more than rich who know how little it can get you. Not everyone who is poor is saved.

* Preachers who say if you don't do the Beatitudes, you won't be saved. They miss the whole point of The Beatitudes which is the inversion of the Kingdom and the availability of the Kingdom to people who are not up in the world's system and the unavailability of those who are up in human estimation.

I've heard people say if you are rich, you will go to hell.

If you are obsessed with the issue of going to Heaven or Hell, you are going to have a hard time reading the Bible. It isn't always talking about that. If you read "Blessed", "Oh that means saved." It does not mean that. It has something to do with that but that's not what it means.

"Woe be..."

v. 24 - "Woe to you who are rich." If you are rich, you are in trouble.
The Spirit of The Disciplines - Chapter - "Is Poverty Spiritual?"

This is a huge tangle in contemporary thought and life. Huge segments of the church that believes riches are a sign of decadence. You couldn't possibly be rich or powerful and be right with God. God is in favor of poor people over rich people. All sorts of confusion. They do derive from a mis-teaching of the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in relationship to the kingdom of man. [55:40]

Jesus Way of Teaching [55:55]

Jesus doesn't teach generally by laying out general trues but by contradicting prevailing assumptions causing you to think about that. Putting stingers in and jarring them that they will not have a problem remember it. *"Did you hear what that man said?"* He teaches by questioning prevailing assumptions and practices.

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When He says, "Blessed are the poor", He is not saying all poor people are blessed. He is saying, "Your assumption that the rich are blessed is false." Poor people are blessed too. There are rich people who are in real trouble.
—> You have to understand how He teaches or you will get caught up in legalisms.

Luke 14:26 - Jesus, "*Hate Your Mother & Father*" [57:55]

Jesus didn't teach people to hate their parents. He was contradicting a generalization that your Mother & Father should determine what you do for life - if you respect & love them, you'll do what they say.

* Zebedee, "*These children must hate me. They left me for Jesus.*"

Jesus is not teaching anyone to hate anyone. He did realize that the interpretation of loving which meant that you would do what your **PARENTS** said even after you have grown up had to be corrected because PARENTS often misdirect you and you have to have a place to stand in the Kingdom of God to redeem **FAMILY** relations.

Luke 14:7-15 - "*Friend, move up higher*" [59:25]

- Sit at the last place and allow the host to invite you up.

He addresses a general practice by putting a particular case before you.

In reference to the Beatitudes, contrary to human expectation, the poor are often blessed because the Kingdom belongs to them, and the rich are not blessed because they are not in the Kingdom...through the kindness of those who practice what Jesus taught.

The meaning of the Beatitudes are to be understood in light of this great inversion, they are primarily the proclamation of the availability of the Kingdom.

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. Look at the grammar. It's not guarantees of blessedness or un-blessedness.

Two Great Questions: "*Who is well off?*" and "*Who is a good person?*" are answered in the Sermon on the Mount.

"Who is well off?" answered in Matthew 5:2-17. It is shocking and revolutionary what He has to say to those who are listening,

"*Do not think I have come to destroy the law*". You say that to those who were thinking the because of the shocking proclamation he just made - The un-blessed on the human order can be blessed.

Luke - The "will be's" & "Woe be's"

—> The essential message is, "Whosoever will may come." **Romans 10:13**

Matthew 11:11 [1:05:25]

"*Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*"

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Luke 16:16 - *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it."*

Jesus was constantly in trouble associating with the wrong people.

Luke 15 - *Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the Scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*

[1:06:50] **The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus.**

That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus.

You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God.

He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. So He can be with anyone, He can be anywhere. That isn't necessarily always true with us. We have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can, like Him, be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God.

The Prophecy of Daniel

[1:07:45]

Why do we try to constantly go back and civilize the Beatitudes? Why do you have people put in such effort as how mourning will save you? How "*Poor in spirit*" is a matter of thinking you are poor?

We try to translate them to fit them in the legalistic mindset. They are disgraceful. They are like the Prodigal Son's Elder brother looking at others with reproach.

This is the announcement of the Kingdom is the stone that is cut out without hands that crushes human order and fills the whole Earth. (Daniel 2:45) That's the eventual outcome of the Kingdom of God. It shakes the foundations (Haggai 2:6-7). The kingdoms of the World have become that of our Lord and of His Christ.

The meaning of the Beatitudes...

This is a very essential part of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. That gospel inverts the natural human orders we see about us in the wisdom of the world.

In our fellowships of disciples we will not respect the human pecking order of values.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 6 [1:10:15]** ~ ~ ~

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxkaVGVhkuA>

[3 of 4 of The Ultimate Questions that Face Human Beings]

[Session 4 1:27:50-1:37:00 (p.40) Session 6 - 17:50 (p. 54)]

1. What is reality? - We spent more time on that than anything else. [Sessions 5 & 6 "Kingdom & Discipleship"] Jesus' Answer - "God & His Kingdom." Everything under that is real. You depart from that and you become increasingly less real.

2. Who is well off? "Blessed" (*The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 4)

How people answer this will mean peace and not peace if you understand where well being lies and it lies in the Kingdom of God. Human beings tend to think well being lies somewhere else. Those of us in Christian service often spend a lot of time worrying about if we're in the right place.

* Gen. 28:12 - Jacob's Ladder. "*God is in this place and I did not know it.*"

Imagine angels ascending & descending on you. It is very important to understand God is where we are. We don't need to be someplace else. We do not have to say, "*Who will ascend into Heaven to bring Him down?*"

"The word is nigh thee. It is in your mouth. It is the word that we preach." **(Romans 10:8)**

God is where you are. Where you are is the doorway to Heaven on Earth. Remember Heaven does not mean what happens after you die. Heaven means the presence of God, the Kingdom of God is here. It does not matter what you are, who you are, what you've got against you.

[Answers the driving question, "Am I in the right place for God's will?"]

That's the lesson of **The Beatitudes** - You only understand the gospel of the Kingdom of God if there is no limit to whom you can go and say, "Blessed."

[2 Contexts: Humans healed by Jesus; Spiritual presence of the Kingdom]

* Write your own Beatitudes - "*Blessed are the _____ .*"

Put somebody in the human scale is thought to nothing. Nobody. Someone who is not blessed. Remember, they are not blessed because they are in the condition they are in, they are blessed because the Kingdom is available to them.

* *Blessed are the...unemployed, the pregnant too many times; those who can't get pregnant, the fat...*

—> **The blessing is not in the condition it is in the Kingdom.**

If you have trouble going to people who are considered un-blessable and pronouncing their blessing in the Kingdom, then you have not got the message of the Kingdom yet. The message of the Kingdom is precisely "*All those human beings regarded as un-blessable are not un-blessable if they enter the Kingdom.*" If they don't that's another story because the Beatitudes are all about the kingdom and entering into the Kingdom.

That is a radical message and it will upset most churches if you preach it. That would mean you are breaking down the social barriers, the pecking orders that most people in our churches assume to be valid. Who are the "nobodies" in our church and how do they get treated? Does Jesus mean treat them all the same?

[\["Good" people, like Jesus, "admire" the unadmirable with agape grace\]](#)

Read Chapter 4 of *The Divine Conspiracy*. "Who is well off?" is fundamental to life. We are responsible for our lives. We make choices. We may feel shut out from God because we are among the un-blessable. That is where we need to understand what is contained in the phrase, "Whosoever will may come."

The Sermon on the Mount deals with the two central questions of the Ultimate Questions that face Human Beings: *Who is well off? Who is a really good person?*

3. Who is a really good person?

[10:25]

Matthew 5:20

"Unless your righteousness exceeds the Scribes and Pharisees..."

"Righteousness" (diakosune) = what makes you a really good person (agape is goodness) [\[N.T. Wright defines 'diakousune' as "Covenant Justice"\]](#)

Not going to Heaven when you die. It means entering into an engagement in your life and practice with the Kingdom of the Heavens. Jewish experience of Heaven and God. God appeared in the atmosphere - the "Heavens" - 1st Heaven = the atmosphere all the way to the ground. Entering into the Kingdom of the Heavens means to engage with what God is doing in the world around us.

What the verse says is unless you get out of the Scribes and Pharisee mode and come to a different level of goodness, you will not be in interactive relationship with the Kingdom of the Heavens.

3 passages to describe what it means to enter Kingdom of God: "Unless..."

1. John 3:5 - Unless you are born again
2. Mt. 18 - Unless you repent and become like a child
3. Mt. 5:20 - Unless you exceed Pharisees righteousness

What is Jesus saying in Matthew 5:20 and following?

What is the righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees?

The Righteousness of the Deed - Mostly what one did not do. "*Shall not.*"

The commands led to a system of righteousness which referred to what you did. "To go beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees" means to locate your righteousness in something other than what you do.

* A thief is not just someone who steals. A thief is someone who would steal if the situation were right. There is a great difference in the person who would steal if the situation is right compared to someone who would never steal no matter what the situation was. There is a great difference in the soul. One can have the soul of a thief, murder or adulterer and never do it. Perhaps because of the fear of what would happen if they did. It is better not to do it.

Jesus is saying unless you get beyond just *not* doing it, you're not going to be in interaction with the Kingdom of God. If you want to interact with the Kingdom of God, you have to move to a different level - your thoughts, feelings, character, habitual way you live in your body and your world. [["The Whole Self"](#)]

Matthew 5 Cases

[16:35]

Jesus contrasts the righteousness of Pharisees with the Kingdom righteousness

Murder - I did not murder so I'm righteous

Adultery - It depends on what we did or did not do

* *"I did not have sex with that woman."* *"Depends on what the meaning of 'is' is."* Bill Clinton learned that language, unfortunately, in church. A list of what you will or won't do comes from the Pharisees. This has become stock and trade for young people dealing with sexual issues.

Divorce - I divorced her legally so I'm righteous.

Keeping Vows - Not keeping them but why you make them in the first place.

Letting Yes be Yes and No be No; Go beyond the wording to the heart of why you are saying what you are saying in the first place. Plain speaking. Simple. He is talking against trying to manipulate people by using impressive language.

Luke 12:1 - *"Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees."*

[20:10]

* "Leaven" (yeast) is the moving, living force within

Why is the Pharisees' leaven hypocrisy?

1) The Pharisee wants to do the right thing.

The best followers of Jesus were Pharisees. They were soon ex-Pharisees. These were good people. They meant well. Very serious about doing the right thing and not doing the wrong thing.

2) If you just try to do the right thing or not do the wrong thing, you will fail.

You have to go to a deeper level of the self than controlling the action.

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34)

What comes out your mouth means there's a lot of it in your heart.

* Mike Tyson biting Holyfield's ear. His explanation, *"I blew it."*

This is very common. That is supposed to let them off the hook. "That wasn't me". But it was him. That's why he blew it. It is in our hearts.

What's in the person comes out. Our actions come from somewhere.

The Pharisee always fails because they do not know that and they do not practice that. They keep trying to control their actions rather than change the heart, mind & feelings.

This is the crux of the matter —> The INTENTION has to be applied at the right place. I have to become the kind of person who not only does not kill, but who would not kill. My INTENTION has to be applied at that level. That's what Jesus is saying. When you turn to that level, the Kingdom of the Heavens will interact with you and you will find that you can change. If you stay at the act level, the Kingdom of the Heavens will not act cooperate with you and you will fail.

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Grace operates at this deeper level. Through GRACE we can become genuinely transformed, our INTENTIONS can be fulfilled, to become the kind of person Jesus was and called us to be and given to us.

Matthew 23

[25:25]

Willard - *"This is one of the passages that really got after me when I was a young minister trying to do something. I began to suspect maybe all the Pharisees are not dead. Maybe I'm one of them."*

Pharisees did not do what they taught. Is the clear implication of this passage - Do what you say, we can do the things Moses said?

Here's why they fail: (v.5), *"they do all their deeds to be noticed by men...they love the place of honor at banquets and being called Rabbi (Professor, Doctor). You have one teacher and you're all brothers. You have one Father. The greatest among you will be your servant."*

People who do things to be seen of men are seeking to be exalted. One of the greatest burdens that will fall of your back is when you learn to not do anything to be seen of men. Life will be much easier. **Matthew 6:1ff**

Men will see you and God will disregard you.

* Fund raising with names on the building - *"To be seen of men"*.

Can't raise money for mops and vacuums to keep a building clean

People give to be seen of men. Fund raising plays on that motivation.

Eight Woes from Jesus compared with loving God and loving your neighbor

"You shut off the Kingdom of the Heaven from men. Serpents. Vipers"

Winds up in a great lament over Jerusalem because they did not understand what God was doing and put itself crosswise. ["put itself **Cross-wise**" Hmmm.]

What is Kingdom Goodness? [Answer to Q#3]

[33:15]

Every aspect of our being is permeated with Agape love.

Don't worry about perfection. Not perfect but realize, there is lot of difference between perfection and forgiveness. The issue is not being perfect, the issue is but getting better by following internal transformation.

The Whole Self - 6 Parts Diagram [Agape is "Kingdom Goodness"] [34:00]

In all aspects of the self, love comes to predominate. What would that look like?

~ **Social Relations**

Rejection is removed from our relationships. We don't reject someone we disagree with. We don't push them away. That's what the Pharisees did to Jesus. That's why they were angry with Jesus sitting and eating with people.

* How can you fire someone in love? Yes, but rarely done that way.

* Kill as an act of love? Yes. almost never is done that way. In an effort to achieve what is loving & good for everyone involved, bring about the death of another person. You don't have to approve of or agree with. To love them, you have to seek their good in the context of everyone that is involved.

Firing - *"As an act of love, I have to fire you because your performance is affecting everyone in the company."*

Even if you disagree being fired, you won't distance yourself from the person who fired you.

In killing, we wind up hating the people we are opposing. You'll see the efforts of governments to get you to hate the person on the other side.

Once we begin to understand what love is, we can eliminate attack and rejection as personal matters that involve hatred, contempt and so on.

You have to be well advanced in Kingdom living before you can avoid that, but the point is you can avoid it and it is a "good" thing for you to do that.

~ **The Body** - Normally opposed to do things that are not loving.

The body can be transformed to do the thing that is loving and un-hateful.

~ **The Soul** - The deepest part of the self [39:30]

The soul has to be retuned. The Law is basic because the soul that works aright is a soul that naturally follows the Law of God.

- **Psalm 19** - *The law of God is perfect, transforming the soul.*

As we come back into order with the Law, the soul is the part that makes all the other parts come together to form one life. When it is broken, life doesn't come together. The healing has to go there.

- **Psalm 23** - A soul that is restored works in harmony with the Law. [40:15]

If you want your soul restored, one way is to begin to track with the law and begin to do the things that the law says. For most people who are in trouble in life, the first thing they need to do is stop doing things that are wrong.

["Stop sinning. You're making things worse" Jesus - John 5]

My soul will begin to track with the Kingdom of God. The abundance of the Kingdom of God will increasingly move into my life. Once you begin to track with the law, you begin to draw on the abundance of the Kingdom of God. That is how you **seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness** and begin to benefit

from that. Everything you need will be provided. If you don't track with it, you will not be tracking in the abundance of God's provision.

~ **The Spirit (or the Heart)** - Surrendered to God, willing to love, not caught up into having my own way.

~ **The Mind** - Not what I want, what's going to happen to me, what's been done to me. A mind devoted to Christ, that keeps Him before the mind will bring different feelings of love, joy, peace instead of anxiety, hatred, depression, and so on. Once you get that kind of transformation, then the actions are different. The actions are a natural expression of what is in [the whole self].

~ **The Heart** - *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.*

The heart (will) restructures by **grace** all of those other circles. If you're devoted to Christ, the love of God, your neighbors, there are certain things you will not think.

We have this idea that what you think in your mind is nobody's business. But it is not my own. It is everybody's business because it shapes my actions come out of what's in my mind. We call it "freedom".

* Pornography is not a private matter. It shapes the mind from the private life and comes out. Cyberspace is seductive because it creates an aspect of intimacy that makes more powerful the sexual tones that come over. Intimacy is what people are looking for in sex. They push physical buttons because they hope to get intimacy out of it but it actually makes it more and more distant.

- There are certain things...we just won't think.

* Politics - Sad observing what people allow themselves to think about others.

There is a lot of stuff you should not think about. People of good character have always know that. *"Don't go there."*

As that transform comes about, the actions will be different.

The Pharisee says, *"Sit on the action!"*

Kingdom righteousness says, *"Take care of the inside. If you want to get control of the actions, deal with what is on the inside, what is in the heart."*

Transforming the Will

[46:50]

What really is the inner most part of us is the heart - what really constitutes the inner most phase of the self. If we pay attention to the will, everything else can be directed from that

In the Mind - *"Don't be conformed but be transformed by the renewing of the mind"* requires intention of the will, the spirit, your heart.

In God's plan, the function of the WILL is to trust God. Surrender of the will to God not to itself. The will has to be surrendered in the sense that it must not be

taken as ultimate or it will be poisonous and turn back on the self. Trying to get it's own way.

Satan's plan is the function of the will to be absorbed in itself.

"All we like sheep has gone astray." (Isaiah 53)

How does a sheep go astray? One blade of grass at a time until lost.

That's how we go astray if we are governed by our will. If we devote our will to God, and through Him to the good of others, we won't go astray. We have to have a larger view. If we have a larger view, all the segments of the self pull into line and we have a self that is devoted to God.

Two Forms of the Will

[49:28]

Extremely important for our culture today that is absorbed in feeling, essentially a sensual culture absorbed in feeling.

1) Impulsive Will - Identify itself with DESIRE. [Self Pleasuring]

If I want, I grab it - like a child. Keeps us alive when younger.

1.) DESIRES conflict with the desires of others you are intimately related to.

2.) Desires conflict with others you are intimately related to.

That's why you have to have a Rational Will.

The failure to have this is typical for adults who never grow up.

To have what I want when I want it.

2) Rational Will - Maturity of adults who will look at the larger picture

Rational will says not what I want but what is good. It says not what do I want but what is good? The person who doesn't grow up is one who doesn't realize the difference between what I desire and what is good. They have identified the "desire" with the "good". **Living in the Kingdom of God is the best way to have a larger view of what is good.**

This comes together in what is a psychological understanding of the "self".

CHARACTER - will settled in habitual patterns of our action. [51:45]

This is what we're looking for in discipleship. Discipleship is the process through which the character of Christ becomes the settled or habitual patterns of our action. It is largely outsourced to our body in our social context.

What we want - the person transformed inwardly is prepared to do without thinking what is good but also has to do with what you do after you think.

Character is largely what we do without thinking but it also has to do with what you do after you act.

* Peter - [52:39] - When Peter said, "I will not deny you." He meant it. He intended to do it. Jesus knew his character. Jesus was not questioning Peter's intentions. Jesus knew what was in the rest of Peter so he knew he would deny him. It was a tribute to Peter's character that he went out and wept bitterly after but that was not the part of his character that controlled his automatic response.

[Peter later boldly proclaiming Jesus led to prison.]

Automatic response was different from his intention. This is typical of the person whose character is not redeemed and healed and brought to wholeness in Christ. It is inconsistent. What do we say about this person? You can't count on the person who is inconsistent. You can count on the person of good, consistent character. Bad character - consistently do what is wrong.

The idea of "Outsourcing" is crucial. Don't underestimate the power of outsourcing to the self. Character involves all those aspects of the self, character is not just a matter of will.

You are reborn, given a relationship to the Kingdom of God and Jesus, and with that you begin to move out. Now You hear commands like...

2 Peter 3:18, "*Grow in grace & the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" [55:00]

As you increasingly allow grace to come in all of these areas your character changes. You can reliably do the things you intend to do. "Self control" is one of the expressions of this. If you have stuff run out of control, "Pop!", out comes something.

Transformation as the self as whole is what we look at when we are cultivating and growing the righteousness of the Kingdom.

Scribes & Pharisees have character but just the wrong character. They have a character that is intending to do things that are right mainly for appearances. They have a hidden dimension of self they don't want people to know. That's why openness and truthfulness become such an important to growth in Christlikeness. Openness keeps us from having the hidden dimension that is running our lives.

Confession means you stop hiding. Even all the disgraceful things you did. Allow people to know who you are. Stop saying, "I can't be open or I can't lead. No one will listen any longer." The past is covered by the blood of Jesus, by forgiveness. You have to count on them to except that also.

In the future, the discipline of confession is so powerful because it opens up the self and enables us to help to change. Confession is good for the soul but bad for the reputation. That's partly why it is good for the soul because it is bad for the reputation. We need to come to the place we are not hiding what've we've done anymore. We admit that we are sinners. That's hard for us in churches because we are caught up in the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees. Be in a position you are not hiding. You want to have group of people you are opening up to.

Transparency - You can't be transparent unless you learn to trust God, received forgiveness and you are prepared to let Him handle your Public Relations. That's the only place there is peace in transparency. When we accept that, and move into that, it clears up all these areas as we move on with growth & grace.

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Love possess all the dimensions of the circle. It **POISES** them to do what is good and what is right. The Body is poised to do what is good without thinking about it.

* Peter did not know his body was poised to do what was wrong without thinking about it. Jesus knew that about him.

Relations to each other are purged from withdrawal and attack. The soul is running smoothly in the tracks of the Kingdom.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 7 @ 1:00:53** ~ ~ ~

~ 08 **The Process of Transformation - Grace**

[38:24]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo7aaKr202g&feature=channel>

[—> Key Session Points: "Grace" applied thru "V-I-M" and Disciplines]

The major issue we have to deal with is in detail how this happens...

1.) Not by Human effort alone.

Not without grace. We are not talking about bringing the inner transformation of the self into Christlikeness by human effort.

2.) Not without Human effort.

We still have to act.

The statement - "*Grow in grace*" is a command. (**2 Peter 3:18**)

How do you grow in grace? Grace is a gift. Can you control that?

* Pull up to it like pulling up to the pump? The answer is, "Sort of."

One of the greatest difficulties we have in our religious circles today is not understanding how effort works with grace. You must make effort. Not without grace & the Holy Spirit, but not by grace & the Holy Spirit alone. That's passivity.

—> The transformation of the inner being - *the righteousness that exceeds the scribes & pharisees* - will not happen passively.

"*Without me you can do nothing.*" (**John 15:5**) That is why there is not boasting in this matter. It is by grace. *Boasting disrupts everything in kingdom living.*

You can be sure if you do nothing, it will be without Him. Let that thought sit with you. The command is *Abide in the vine*. That's like "*grow in grace.*"

I. The Role of GRACE in the Life We are Talking About

[3:45]

(def.) God acting in our lives to bring about what we can not do on our own.

Is it unmerited favor? Of course it is, but it if is "Unmerited Favor" you don't say what it does. This is where the teaching of Grace can slip over into the default gospel - Grace just has to do with the imputation of righteousness. The merit of Christ substituted for your demerit to bring you out of the red into the black. You have to say more about **Grace** than unmerited favor. **Grace** is *God acting in our lives to bring about what we can not make happen on our own.*

—> Grace is not opposed to effort but to earning.

God acting in our lives does not mean that we do nothing. Grace means we never come to the place saying we earned what comes out of the process. Whether earning into heaven, success in ministry, a lovely family. Grace is always involved in that. You always wind up saying, "*Thank God*" for the activity of God on your behalf.

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The effect is to eliminate pride, boasting, self reliance and self will. It is to say to God, *"I am dependent upon you. I am surrendered to you. I am following your direction. I am expecting your help. I am going to do my very best but I will not trust my best. I will engage in disciplines but I don't trust disciplines. I will seek knowledge. I will seek to be strong. But I don't trust that. My trust is in God."*

Grace does not make you passive but it also doesn't allow you to be proud. It does not allow you to trust yourself because you recognize something your involved with is far greater than anything you can do.

Paul On Grace

[7:25]

Ephesians 3:8, *"Unto me the least of all saints this grace is given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."* Guilt? No. God acting in us? Yes
Paul seems to have understood "grace" best.

I Corinthians 15:10, *"I am the least of the apostles...By the **grace** of God I am what I am. His **grace** toward me did not prove in vain. But I labored even more than all of them. Yet not I but the grace of God with me."*

What is grace?

God acting in our lives to bring about what we can not do on our own.

Paul could not have had the tremendous effect had in preaching the gospel on his own. Paul was miles ahead of the other apostles. Was it him? He did something. He could have stayed at home. He got out. He went.

II Corinthians 9:8, *"And God is able to make all **grace** abound to you that all is having all sufficiently in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."*

Grace is not just for guilt (of past sins.) **Grace** is for life. When we're done dealing with guilt, we still need grace. The person who is living fully in the Kingdom of God is consuming **grace** all the time. **Grace** is needed for guilt but compared to the saint uses in their lifetime, that's nothing. *The saint burns **grace** like a 747 burns fuel on takeoff.* All is accompanied by **grace** and much more than they could do on their own.

II Corinthians 11 - *"My **grace** is sufficient for you."*

Not for guilt but the strength Paul needed in his weakness to do what Paul was going to do.

"Therefore I would rather boast about my weakness."

My weakness is an opportunity for the grace of God acting.

"Therefore I am well content with weakness, insults, etc...for when I am weak then I am strong."

Thank God I am weak so I get to know the power of God working in me. Thank God for the attack...insult...weak. Imagine a person who is being attacked and saying, "Thank God!" Why would one be thankful? Because they expected to see God acting in that situation. That is better than them being able to control it themselves. That's what Paul is talking about.

II. Holistic Picture of Spiritual Growth

[15:10]

Have all the factors in place our mind is centered in the mind of Christ and we'll gradually take on that mind.

—> The Golden Triangle

Top - Action of the Holy Spirit

Bottom Left - Ordinary Events of Life - Where you are

* Jacob, "Surely God is in this place."

We don't throw trials & temptations away. We don't flee to a monastery. We live an ordinary life and we experience trials. We are not distressed because we expect God to act in those situations. Wait. It may not be possible for us to hold still and let that happen? Disciplines come into play.

Bottom Right - Planned disciplines to put on a new heart

When you fail, are you going to try harder? No. Beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees. Not just trying. Put yourself in a position where you can train & receive help. That's where planned disciplines to put on a new heart comes in.

—> **II Peter 1:5-10** - A story of progression

The planned disciplines are crucial. When we are think about what we are to do in the religious life, this is the area we are most apt to miss: - the understanding we have to take practices that enable us to receive grace in ordinary events of life to keep our mind centered in the mind of Christ acting with the Holy Spirit to be the kind of person Jesus has called us to be and gives us to be.

You plan for this.

III. V-I-M Principle

[18:20]

I'll talk more about this later on... [[Session 9 @ 32:20-39:50 \(p. 80\)](#)]

Outline of Spiritual Growth - Any change requires Vision - Intention - Means
Change can happen even at a natural level.

~ **VISION** - Have to have the **Vision** of the goodness for what we are after

* Learning Algebra requires the vision of it's goodness

* Unused exercise machine. I had no **Vision & Intention**, just Means.

"Truthfully, it doesn't mean that much to me. I have not formed the intention."

The gospel is the Vision - "Living in the Kingdom of God"

~ **INTENTION** - If we don't have the vision, we won't form the **intention**.

The reasons we don't "*Bless those who curse us*" because we don't **intend** to do it.

When we get gripped with VISION of the goodness of it, the INTENTION will follow. Once we have the Intention, the MEANS come in.

~ **MEANS** - Don't fall into the area of righteousness. Christ didn't tell us to go into solitude but He went into solitude. If He needed it, I might need it myself. My **Vision** - preaching to bring people to trust Christ. I moved by accident into solitude and discovered what solitude and silence could do to build all these things. I backed my way into solitude & silence. I thought solitude and silence sounded awfully Catholic. I thought they were all wrong. I had no experience of it. Reading helped me see things differently. Practice leads into **Means** so my **Intention** to bring to pass a certain vision. The **Vision** changed as it went along. I began to realize how important what kind of person I was.

* My preaching style - I had to go through a process of thinking.

I became intent more on who I was than what I was doing. I now believe the most important thing that God gets out of my life is the person I become. Actually the most important thing I get out of my life is the person I become. The things I might accomplish in the way of ministry are very small compared to the importance of my becoming Christlike. The more Christlike I become the greater my results will be, but that's not why I do it.

The CHURCH's problem is never that we need more money, more influence, more people. The problem is the quality of the people that are there and that begins with me. What is the quality of my life? Of course, there are meaningful questions about other things but that is most important.

IV. Understand the Disciplines

[26:00]

~ Disciplines of Abstinence

Things you abstain from you need to step out of to allow things to shift around in your soul and your body and to break free from old patterns that keep you enslaved.

~ Disciplines of Engagement

I started over here - Study, worship, prayer, celebration, service, fellowship, confession. I started with these [Engagement]. If that's all you've got, that's a short recipe for burnout. You grind away at those, especially in a social context where people have all sorts of things for you to do, that's going to burn you out. It will not put you in touch with things that will nourish you and grow you. It will not allow you to have a joyous, strong walk with Jesus. In order to get that you have to shift over and practice these other things - "Abstinence".

Step out of it to shift things in your soul & body to break free of old patterns that keep you enslaved.

—> Solitude, Silence & Fasting - the big ones on the list. Others are more like hygienic exercises. They are important but they don't have the importance of those first three. You begin to practice them and they begin to sustain you.

With Solitude it begins very quickly. Solitude doing nothing, is connected to Sabbath. The Moral Law not the Ritual Law. It turns out to be moral law because it has so much to do with your well being and the well being of others you are related to. Solitude for most people is the only way to practice Sabbath.

IV. A.) Summary of Disciplines in Practice

[29:15]

As you experiment with them, they will begin to confirm themselves to you. You enter into them experimentally, expecting the Lord to be lead you and be with you and He will. This will be part of His teaching presence with you.

Don't try to force things. Don't try to make things happen. Be gentle, experimental. If you don't succeed, don't worry. Find out what went wrong, try to fix it and try again.

These are not righteousness, not laws, they are wisdom. As you enter into them, you will begin to experience from God and your from own nature and soul a kind of renewal and strength that will then put you in position to engage in study and worship in a way you've never done it before.

Out of these will come a richness of life in the kingdom that will allow you to do things Jesus said at a walk. All of the struggle and tension will gradually move out of your life and you'll understand when Jesus said,

"My yoke is easy. My burden is light." **Matthew 11:28**

Now remember, this is not behavior modification like AA. AA is aimed at behavior modification. This does not aim at behavior modification but it has as its result

incredible behavior modification. That's not what you aim at. You aim at the inner transformation of the self. This is what it means to grown in grace. As you enter into these things, you increasingly receive grace through your knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

IV. B.) How does one practice the disciplines?

You decide to live as Jesus' student. You begin to obey his teaching. You observe why you fail and you will fail. Do in reliance on the Spirit what will remove the causes of these failures. The list is not complete list. A discipline is...

(def.) - **A discipline is something in your power that you do in order to enable you to do what you can not do by direct effort.** [32:10]

The principle is Indirection. Then find the things that will help you grow and change. As a result, what comes out of you is different because what is inside of you is different.

If you don't decide to live as Jesus' student, you are not a disciple. Disciplines are for disciples. If you are going to take an orderly approach, you need to do this to become a disciple.

IV. C.) Churches & Spiritual Disciplines

[33:18]

They have to organize program of spiritual growth around the disciplines. You can not get growth in Christlikeness out of church as usual. There just isn't enough there. A couple of hours in church, some giving, isn't enough. You have to plan for more. Many churches are making available more intensive experiences.

The result will be you will get out of improper subordination in your self where body is running the show, the soul is subordinate to that, the mind to the soul, the spirit to the mind and God to the whole she-bang. That's the situation that people live in. Sometimes they leave out God and live for their body. The prominence of the body in the human life is the result of that.

Proper subordination puts God first. The SPIRIT is the WILL it puts the will under God. The MIND at the direction at the SPIRIT - THOUGHTS & FEELINGS. The SOUL begins to respond to the MIND and the SPIRIT and God. The BODY finally takes it place under the SOUL rather than driving the SOUL, which drives the MIND with drives the SPIRIT, which tries to drive God which doesn't work very well.

What does this [disciplines] have to do with being saved?

[35:38]

Situation in our churches - Discipleship is one thing and being Christian is another.

IV. D.) [Theology Behind Spiritual Growth]

Regeneration - New life from above - comes at the new birth. Now we're entering into an interactive relationship with God and His son Jesus and His Kingdom. We are forgiven. **Justification** is an appropriate thing. The life which comes in regeneration naturally develops into **Sanctification** - *the established relationship walk with Jesus*. That naturally progresses to **Glorification**. Glorification has already begun. (Colossians 3 - "*When Christ shall appear, you will also appear glorious.*") That glory begins to shine already. When you are waking this path, you are going look different. There is going to be something in you that that people will see. They will respond to it. They will want to know where it comes from and they want to have it themselves. There will be a beauty in you.

* "Let the Beauty of Jesus be Seen in Me" song

Being SAVED is not a matter of where you are going but who you are now.
You are a participant in the life that Jesus is now living here.
That's what salvation is.

That all fits together once you start at the right place and keep Jesus in the right place, namely central. You see him as King over a Kingdom in which He invites you to live with Him now.

Colossians 1:13 - "*We are transformed from a kingdom of darkness to a kingdom of the Son He loves.*"

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 8 @ 38:23** ~ ~ ~

~ 09 **Church Communities**

[1:34:18]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSE9XytFh5w>

Training Differently - Changing the Roots of Behavior

This involves...

- Wanting to not want what we now want.
 - Desiring to not have desires we now have.
 - Wanting to not think as we now think.

You have to go to that level to begin to deal with the roots of behavior.

[Repentance]

That really gets to serious change. You want to have different thoughts, feelings, different ways of interacting with people.

* Church Life Prayer - At the social level, we have to change the way we pray for people. Instead of promising to pray for people, say, "Let's pray right now." That's a considerable step for many people. That's at a social level.

We have to want to change those inner habits. We have to really want our should to hook up in different ways. If we don't understand this, we won't get down to the level of changes that really need to be made. That will affect our church activities too.

How We Gather as Churches

[3:00]

One of things you have to think is what we do know is not what the church has always done. It does not mean what we now do is not wrong but not always what the church has done. One thing you can say is that the Church has always "gathered". People have come together. Once you get past that, there's not a lot we've always done. Often our practices when we do gather are more of things what we do is from society rather than something that would be wise for the church to do.

Pastors & leaders have the primary responsibility of enabling people to be together in way that they will flourish and grow in Christlikeness. They will develop spiritual competence. They will be able to do things we associate with being a Christian - be able & competent in things like speaking the Gospel, helping people who need help, praying, enduring suffering joyously. That's what we're aiming at.

Ephesians 4 - *What we do when we gather as a church.*

[5:30]

Tied to the Great Commission, to the V-I-M principle.

The communities use to gather in the churches. That is no longer possible. The demographics are very different. Have to think differently than 75 years ago.

Statements of what it's supposed to all come out to... [6:30]
—> The basic objective - Paul is talking about gifting of people in the church.

UNITY - 4:1 - *"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling in which you've been called...gentleness, patience, forbearance..."*

The church will be a community where there is no rejection. Offenses will be dealt with forgiveness. People would not go off on their own and sulking and resenting things and staying angry. The idea of...

"Preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all..."

The kind of unity in love that is envisioned among the disciples of Jesus.

"By your love for one another they will know you are my students"

John 13:33-35 Not the right doctrine, not right practice. One thing - LOVE.

GIFTING

People acting with extraordinary power to accomplish the ends of the Church. Not a manifestation of human abilities but a manifestation of Kingdom power. The Kingdom comes into the Church. People of Christ would have the unity because the people in leadership are exercising gifts - **grace** to accomplish what they can't accomplish from human ingenuity. Not wind up humanly engineered.

v. 11 *"Gifts to equip the saints for the work of service/ministry to build the body."*

—> *Church growth is not more Christians but bigger Christians.*

v. 13 *"Until we all attain the unity...maturity...fullness of Christ."*

v. 14 Results: *"No longer children..."* Solid people who can't be thrown around

v. 15 Contrasted with *"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up..."*

[14:10] When you talk about church growth, talk about this passage. Numbers are not to be despised but the truth is you get more numbers if you have this kind of growth than if you don't.

The natural process for the spread of the gospel and bringing of people into the body of Christ is one on one contact with individuals who have in them something so strong and so powerful that other people by and large will naturally want it.

The ordinary person will, when they see this realization of Christ in individuals, they will come. You won't have enough room to hold them.

PUT OFF OLD 4:22 - *"Lay aside the old self."* [15:00]

All the parts of the self that are filled with the wrong stuff. Something you do. There is not suggestion that it will just happen. It won't just happen to you. It won't happen unless you have help but it won't happen if you don't do it. *"I really want to change."* We have to fill out the words and make the meaningful. *"Laying*

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aside" ought to mean something. This is major for what we are talking about - what we do in the local congregation.

Another key word - "Mortify" - let it die, to kill it off.

* Mortgage (def.) *"To kill something off by degrees"*

Colossians 3 - *"Your life is hid with Christ in God...Mortify therefore your members which are on the Earth."* The parts of your life that you can do in the flesh. *"Get rid of evil concupiscence."* (inherently bad desires). "Covetousness which is idolatry" the willingness to have what someone else has at their expense.

PUT ON NEW 4:25 - *"Put on the new self" - "Speak truth"* [20:00]
"...laying off falsehood"

Truth is so central to the kind of growth and community life we are talking about. *"Don't give the devil an opportunity."*

"Edification according to the need for the moment."

Take the similar passages in Galatians, Colossians, Sermon on the Mount - Don't all say the same thing because they are not Laws. It's not the "list".

They are all expressing a kind of life and activity that naturally wells up from interchange that comes with becoming a Kingdom person following Christ.

What's the deal? If you become the kind of person who lives Ephesians 4, you'll take the Sermon on the Mount in a walk. Colossians 3 will easy. You really have to understand this so you don't fall into legalism. These are not laws. If you get one, you'll have the others. Because you will have changed to such an extent.

If you become the **kind of person** who can bless those who curse you, you will have become the **kind of person** who will be able to do nearly all the others things that are mentioned. That's not true if you try to treat it as laws. You'll drive yourself batty. It comes out before you could stop it. You weren't thinking. The character of legalism is you have to always be thinking and you can't think fast enough to stay up with it.

The Picture of the Church [24:20]

A body of people who are together taking on the character of Christ. Now, it doesn't tell you how to do it. Doesn't tell you to meet on Sundays, in an auditorium, with tables & chairs. For the most part these things don't matter and that's why it doesn't say anything about them.

Leith Anderson - What is not mentioned in scripture. [25:15]

"While the New Testament often speaks about churches, it is surprisingly silent about many matters we associate with church structure and life. No architecture,

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pulpits, sermons, music, Sunday School, order of worship, no Bibles, denominations, camps, pastor's conferences or board meeting minutes. Those striving to be like the New Testament church strive to live its absolutes not details. The details simply are not given."

The Church Today [26:30]

Q - Why does the New Testament say nothing about all those matters to which the usual congregation today devotes almost all of its attention?

A - It might be because nearly everything we devote our attention to today doesn't matter.

It isn't that it doesn't matter at all but it doesn't matter which of the things that we do to form the framework of our activities. Something else matters not the things that we spend most of our time thinking about.

The Vision - The Great Commission = Make disciples [28:00]

What do you do to do that? [see [Session 5, pages 46-49](#)]

1. Make the Trinitarian presence the rule of your meetings.
2. Teach people to do everything Jesus said (Paul addresses this in Ephesians 4)
 - Paul did not tell us how to do that. I want to suggest that the reason he didn't do that was he assumed the quality of life that we are living would be such that we would attract and enlist other people into discipleship to Jesus. The Holy Spirit would come into the group and supervise and direct as they were disciples. The result is that people would teach one another how to do all the things that Jesus said.

How are people going to gather? We have to think in a different way [29:45]

In Manhattan, you have 10,000 people in one block.

Choice - The natural ways people will be together - OR - meet in one place.

[The answer - being the church in the 10K minutes not size]

Demographics make it impossible to gather in today's urban communities.

If you filled all the churches/synagogues once a week, you'll reach 3-5%

The church has to be located in a different way. People will still meet. We have to think in a different way about what we do as we carry out the commission of Jesus.

The way we do that in my opinion is we apply **the V-I-M principle: Vision-Intention-Means** now to the group. [32:20]

[The V-I-M Principle - [Session 8 @ 18:20 \(p. 73\)](#)]

We really do ask ourselves, "*What is our vision in coming together?*"

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In most cases, we really don't have much of a vision.

"Success" in church - we tend to think ABC: Attendance, Buildings & Cash
The Vision will determine our Intention; the Intention will relate to the Means.

If we are happy with what we have, we should stay with it. [35:00]

If character transformation of our people and the world is not happening, we need to ask why do we do what we do? Is what we do conducive to the vision we have for living for Christ now?

We take **the V-I-M principle** and apply it to the group.

If the Vision were the Great Commission and the local group identifies that intends it and we do what do to realize that, you have the unity of the V-I-M principle applied to the local group.

[36:40] In my church, my group, is that what we do? It is very hard to come to grips with the the vision that is actually operating in a group. We tend to become obsessed with perpetuating the group trying to make it survive. The result is we have distraction from the Great Commission. We really have to take hold of this. If we are not doing the Great Commission, there are some wrenching things we need to talk about. Applying V-I-M to the local congregations might well mean that there are some radical changes that have to be made.

The typical church, denomination, para-church does not intend and does not have the vision of implementing the Great Commission. They do not come into existence on that basis and usually they don't know it. If we are going to get a hold of our situation today for Christ, this is where we have to start. The common problem is that people are distracted upholding the church as it is. They don't have their eye on transforming the individuals in the group into Christlikeness and that spreading throughout the community in a virus like way not only bringing more people in to the church, which I am sure it will, but also starting groups here, here, here, then spreading out just like Jesus said. (Acts 1:8) [39:50]

Paul's Vision - Treasure & Vessel - II Corinthians 4:7 [40:40]

"Treasure" is "the glory of God in the face of Christ" (v. 6)

Things age, even institutions. In religion, nothing fails like success. The more successful, the more it draws more people who don't share the enthusiasm for Christ and tendency is for the institution to lose it's vision & intention and the means become ineffective. When that happens, the church still wants to go on. The people won't let it die.

* A pastor who took a sledgehammer to the choir loft

Get out of the mode of saving the vessel. The danger is we will perpetuate the vessel and forget the treasure which is Christ living in the group.

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"I was determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (Corinthians)

Paul came in his weakness, apparently not a very good speaker, and saw the power of God accomplishing the transformation of individuals. Paul focused on Christ and what Christ was doing...in your life as Christ acts and lives and works. Our difficulty is to bring ourselves to the point to where that's the only thing we will pay attention to in our groups.

If we are going to see the transformation of our groups into churches - people who come together and in that Christ is living and people are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. This will get us out of the bind of the gap between Christianity and discipleship, between consumer Christianity and Christianity as a perpetual transformation of individuals - *People engaged deeply in pursuing and following after Christ.*

How can we make this possible?

[48:45]

We don't just hold to the distinctions of our group. We don't take the inner transformation as our vision and our goal. We don't expect Paul's words in Ephesians 4 and we don't make it our goal. We have too low expectations. If someone is flourishing in Christ, they are the exception not the rule. We often adjust our group policies to the mediocre, consumer Christian who has no expectation that they will change and grow. The result is that have people who do not grow. We are often filled with people who are mean, angry, contentious toward each other. We walk on egg shells so we don't offend each other. We try to be nice. The inner reality does not change.

TWO CHURCH PRIORITIES

[50:30]

Church Priority #1 - Examine our Gospel

If the message we preach doesn't naturally lead into discipleship and transformation then it's not going to happen. What do we call people to? What do we tell people is possible in the body of Christ? We have to look at our sermons in a way that would actually happen.

We need to talk about the Kingdom, about God's presence in our lives, about learning as a process that goes on after we become Christians. We have lost the tradition of the seeker by in large in our churches. We have the tradition of arriving and sitting down and saying everything is settled that is essential so I'm just going to wait until I die or we give our attention to other things.

The picture in the New Testament is continually seeking more and more, learning more and more. When you become old, you grow stronger and stronger in spiritual

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realm because you continue to grow spiritually through death on this side but our life continues in His world. *"You shall not taste death".*

Jesus said, *"I go to prepare a place for you."* He's working!

Like here, we will work with Him like He is now working. We will prepare the Universe in which we will live with Him. It isn't going to be just passive observance. Do you ask yourself, *"What will you be doing 400 years from now? 10,000 years from now?"*

Our life here should be a natural progression into eternity. What we're doing here is not just sitting and waiting. You should have more and more power over the goods of this world for the benefit of others who are here and for the glory of God. The Government of God comes to us and gradually extends.

Does our gospel say anything about that?

As we preach the gospel of the Kingdom discipleship begins to emerge.

The primary field of evangelism in our day is the American Church [55:40]

The gospel of discipleship and kingdom living needs to be taught in the large array of non-discipleship Christianity. They who are identified as Christians but are not Disciples need to be evangelized. They need to hear the gospel. If we do that, discipleship will naturally emerge. People are not disciples because they have refused it. By and large they have never been invited. See if people have ever received an intelligent invitation to be a disciple of Jesus.

Until we move to that level, the church will stand as a default position for "Consumer Christianity". You are going to find people may be stirred up. They may be worried about you. *"I'm a Christian. I received Jesus as my savior. Do I need to do anything more than that?" "I'm saved. I'm going to Heaven. What's the point of discipleship? I have accepted the system. I don't need discipleship. I'll do that after I die."*

They have been presented a version of Christianity that has nothing to do with discipleship and they simply don't see the connection.

[A disciple is] the reality of being a person who belongs to Christ is different from the default position.

With an existing group you have to renegotiate the contract with what people have in mind what they are required to do. As discipleship begins to emerge in a group, it will challenge others to begin to think, *"Am I right or not?"* Many will become angry and say, *"You have changed the conditions of our agreement. Our agreement was I can be a Christian and not do what you are talking about. Why are you changing the conditions?"*

This goes deeply into the under-girding theology of our whole Western Christian system. It challenges us to say what really it is to be a Christian and to be saved. That will make very many people unhappy. You're going to be suggesting there is

something essential about obeying Christ, about changing, about losing those things that cause so much sin, distress and loss among professing Christians. You will say, "That's not the way it's supposed to be. It can be otherwise. We're going to take steps to do that because that's what our group stands for." We're going to take steps to renegotiate. You will lose people if you say that.

* Oak Hills Church, Sacramento lost 700 people.

Church Priority #2 - BE then BUILD Disciples

[1:05:15]

The "M" in V-I-M:

Find the Means to Carry out the Intention of a Discipleship Model

[\["Make Disciples in the Kingdom" - Session 5 @ 24:25 \(p. 46-49\)\]](#)

1.) Be Disciples Yourself

Learning how to do what Jesus said in the clear & unclear areas.

Learn to how to live in the power of God not our own means.

Power comes from God. If it doesn't come from God, I let it go.

The Temptation is to take it into our own hands.

* Uzzah reached out to catch the falling Ark (II Samuel 6:1-6)

If I am going to lead and disciple others, I have to be prepared to let the Ark fall if God does not steady it. I have to be a disciple who really does trust God to do the right thing. If you have leadership like that, you're prepared to move on.

2.) Build Disciples

What are you going to do to help people who say, *"I want to be a disciple and I want to grow? I want to learn how to do the things that Jesus said and Jesus did."*

Aim all our activities at that objective: We are a group of disciples of Jesus Christ. Then people coming in sign on on that basis. The next thing you want to do is to actually teach them to do what Jesus said. Your main business is to grow people as disciples of Jesus.

What kinds of songs, Sunday School, services will we do to accomplish this? All of these will have one objective - How do they relate to learning to do the things Jesus said? Bringing people to the point where they easily and routinely did the things that Jesus said.

CASE STUDY: "Yes be Yes" Teaching

[1:11:00]

Matthew 5:37 - *"Let your Yes be Yes and No be No."*

Jesus is shifting from the outside to the inside. Why do people swear? It is any way of exaggerating, shading that would be manipulative to people doing things or to believe what they might not believe if they had a flat statement of fact.

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v. 37 - If you don't let your Yes be Yes and No be No, there's something inside that needs to be changed. *"Anything beyond this is of evil."* What's the evil? The "evil" is the desire to get people to do things they may not want to do. It can lead to lying but normally this isn't lying, it is a use of language to shade things.

* "Yes be Yes" in Churches - Exaggeration is a primary problem for churches because churches want to present themselves in a good light. That's why there's so much performances in our Christian meetings. We find ourselves in our meetings exaggerating, trying to put things in the best light. Jesus wants us to learn the habit of very simply saying things the way they are and let it stand.

Our Advertising system is manipulative, distracting. Just watch it. Then ask yourself, *"To what extent do our churches and do Christians manage to stay involved in this system in plain speaking?"*

I have to be careful to listen and respond to a way that is simple. If I don't do that, I wind up manipulating the person to make myself or my group look good.

Learning "Yes be Yes" [Two Steps: Awareness & Truth Telling] [1:16:10]

1st Step - AWARENESS - Help people learn of what's going on when they do that.

I am more interested in getting my way. I realize I'm constantly engineering my language. I am more concerned about myself and my projects than I am about them. Help people understand what they are doing when they do that.

- The "Discipline of Silence" teaches us to let people know us without a covering of language. One of the hardest things about being silent is letting people make up their own mind. Here is a Good Discipline - Let others have the last word shifts the ground and it allows them to make up their mind. Often they have things very valuable things to say.

* Family - Let a CHILD have the last word not the PARENT. You have respect for another person. Respect allows them to grow and thrive because they are not being pushed aside by someone else who is asserting their language and pushing their way over the will of the person in question.

* Preachers - Often they need to not say anything and let their people talk.
Swearing - invoking a power to have our way over someone.

2nd Step - TRUTH TELLING [1:19:20]

Identify cases where more than Yes is offered. Not pretending I have done something that I have not. Example in Academia - *"Yes, I read that book."*

How about not saying anything and letting them think of me what they will. If I'm concerned, I'm going to put the very best spin on me.

What if I lied? Discipline - Go back and tell people the truth when you have lied.

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Practical ways to pay a price for what is unlike Jesus.

* A Dad who can not yell at his son. *"Give \$5,000 to your wife's favorite charity every time you yell at your son."*

* St. Benedict - To fight lustful thoughts he would roll in a briar patch

When we are prepared to take steps, we can actually change in something as simple as Yes and No and not being manipulative of people.

[—> [Transition from this area of application back to the general discussion](#)]

Practice - Understand what is is and be able to discuss and take suggestions for changing habits. Going through that process, coming back and talking about it, giving feedback. Further discussion, prayer, further suggestions on how to change the habits.

Suppose that's what we did in our CHURCHES - organized entirely around the objective of becoming internally Christ like people who routinely and easily did the things that He said. [1:23:47]

We would have to add to our programs a texture of interaction thick enough and right enough to help people form new habits. It would help us to announce publicly that's what we do.

BUILDING DISCIPLES in FAMILIES

They need this so badly. Dads need to learn how to do this.

* Dallas, *"I hurt my son badly when he was young. I did not do what I know I needed to do - to be as gracious and kind and patient with him as I should have been."*

Could we teach people to be like that? Could we say...

We teach FATHERS & MOTHERS how to deal with CHILDREN in such a way that they do not become frustrated and angry, that they are not hurt. How we handle the situation between parents & children is one where they are nourished and brought up. Even if they are not obedient, we still manage to live with them, love them and grow with them.

One of the biggest problems in today's families is impatience. Children needs lot of patience and understanding. But if the parents are so worried and hurried, they can't be? Can we say to people,

"We can teach you how to live without hurry. How to keep sabbath. How to be strong, rested and present with your children."

"We teach you how to have love in your heart so that the things said in I Corinthians 13 come out - Love is kind, patient, does not envy..."

BUILDING DISCIPLES in CHURCHES

[1:27:55]

You can organize a Christian group around this. You need leaders & teachers that manifest discipleship. There is going to have to Power present. You can not do this by just being nice. You have to have both the Fruit of the Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit. If you don't have the Fruit, you can't stand the power of the Gifts. If you don't have the Gifts, you can't sustain a life in which the Fruit flourishes. You have to have both.

Our churches can do this. They have done that in the past. Look at the old Wesleyan class meetings. Look at the Franciscan, Benedictine, Augustinian. Wesley refused to call the movement a church. Wesleyans were called societies. We just need to get Christians together in such a way they understand their objectives, they share their problems, they pray and minister to one another in small groups in such a way that they actually grew into Christlikeness.

It can happen again today if we intend and apply the MEANS that are appropriate to make it happen. [1:30:27]

Why don't we do it? [[Pastors & Leaders are not living as Disciples.](#)]

—> "We teach people to do what Jesus said."

Response - Love those who don't go along. Some may leave. Some may be mad and stay. No matter what, you don't become mad at them. This person disagrees with me but I love them still and I will serve them. Who knows what will come of that. Maybe they will say next time by, "*I see this is right and I want in on it.*" As a disciple, I still love those who are not ready to understand. Some when they do understand don't want it.

* Parable of the Sower - They might be in the good soil the next time.

We want to turn our churches into centers of Love (Ephesians 4)

"Speak the Truth in Love." That means *Let our Yes be Yes and our No be No.*

As we do that the body grows in fulness, people nourish one another and change comes about. The body of Christ grows up into the fulness of Jesus Christ and stands in the world as a contact point between Heaven and Earth where the Angels of God descend and ascend upon Jesus who is in the midst of the people.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 9 - 1:34:18** ~ ~ ~

~ 10 **Kingdom Living - "Sermon on the Mount"**

[42:50]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbyjjJ0SGe0>

Church and the Kingdom

(Intro)

Background - What God is doing and what is He like. How He works in human history and especially in a hidden way. His kingdom comes into the world which He made and was a part of the kingdom. In time His son comes into the world and calls people to follow Him. We fit in there.

How we proceed as local congregations if in fact we intended to teach people to do everything that Jesus said. What are we trying to do? If that were what we intended to do we would evaluate everything in line with that.

The Vision that governs the local group - *Great Commission to Make Disciples*
Is there more than simply surviving, "Keep on keeping on"? Perpetuation.

The issue is, "What are we trying to do?"

Clarification of our intention and decision in light of that vision.

Pastoring = Wisely arranging for people to be together for their spiritual growth
Spiritual development = Increasing obedience to Christ from the heart.

A lot of spiritual formation today does not have the focus on obedience.

The engine that pulls the train of Christian spiritual formation is obedience to Christ

Avoid Legalism when you go in that direction not by aiming at doing the right thing or not doing the wrong thing. That's the righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees. You aim at obedience to Christ by inward transformation.

You aim at inward transformation and obedience to Christ is the result.

How? * Let our Yes be Yes and No be No

Most of what we spend our time doing in our local meetings is not clearly directed toward inward transformation that will result in obedience.

The results testify to that. What we do & preach or what we don't do & don't preach.

Study in history what people did when they were together when they were working to that end. Nearly every denomination can look back at a time when they were focused on that. Find an equivalent of where you are.

[[Church History - see #9 @ the End p. 48](#)]

It's a real struggle because you are essentially trying to change the understanding that the people have who come and who support financially and by their presence and by their efforts. Tough to negotiate and get through.

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Recognize the problems but not be detoured from the Goal: **Ourselves and leading others to change to the point that they become people who routinely do the things Jesus said do, not as the exception but as the rule of their life.**

Practicing the Sermon on the Mount

[6:50]

Matt 7:21 - *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of the Heavens. But he who does the will of my Father who is in the Heavens."*

He is not talking about going to Heaven when you die. If you don't understand how Jesus teaches you rush off and make up a bunch of laws. He is talking about becoming the kind of person who is going to be in an interactive relationship with the Kingdom of the Heavens. *"Many will say, Lord, Lord..."*

He does not reply by saying, "You didn't do that." What he says is that's a different story. He will declare, *"I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness."* The reference is back to who are you and not what you do.

— You can get involved in works like that and still not be changed.

* Samson - Judges: Mighty deeds do not necessarily have to do with character. God performs mighty deeds through people because of what He wants to accomplish.

* I Corinthians - *"You do not come behind in any spiritual gift."* The letter is about character problems and the inner life and then gifts fit in to that. Gifts - Ephesians 4 - Have to have gifts for the body to work, not just Fruit.

* Fruit of the Spirit - Character Gifts of the Spirit - Power

Gifts don't necessarily mean Christ-like. Gifted can be not well balanced.

Matthew 7:24 - *"Everyone who hears my words and acts..."*

The premise is to do what Jesus said!

Do you have the thought that we're supposed to do what Jesus said?

Is there some good reason why we don't need to do what Jesus said?

* "Dispensationalism"

[15:00]

Scofield Bible states the Sermon on the Mount is for the Millennium except for divorce and forgiveness. You have whole systems of avoiding what Jesus said to do

* Southern Baptists & Charismatics

People in churches say to Dallas, "Why don't we hear this?"

[16:35]

Jesus is pretty clear about it. He doesn't say, "In the millennium..."

A serious doubt whether we are supposed to or can do what Jesus said.

* *"The beast in me is caged by frail and fragile bars"* Johnny Cash

People present the Christian faith as that's the way it is until we die.

* Charlie Daniels,

Oh Jesus, how could you love me? Oh Jesus, how could you love me?

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Cause when I've a choice of good & bad, I choose bad 2 out of 3.

*Do we really believe what Jesus said is for us to do, we can do and we should do?
The overwhelming sense is we don't need to do it and probably can't. [19:45]*

The Sermon on the Mount and sits there and at most makes people feel a little guilty. If they get very serious, they are apt to be driven into legalism. But they never come to terms with it.

Try to talk about the Sermon in a way that it will become the substance of our teaching and of our lives in such a way that each of us will say, "Yes, this is for me." And each of us we will set our course to live out the things Jesus is talking about. We will become the kind of person who will do what He says, not in a pharisaical way but in the way of discipleship which moves in the way toward inner transformation. The kind of inner life that leads us easily to do that.

There's enough people in this room to turn the world on it's ear. You're not going to do it with a slick plan for church growth. You are not going to do in an any other way than by your own transformation and that spreading out to other people. That's the only way it works.

Outline of the Sermon "*The Heart that Jesus Gives*" [22:05-30:35]

<i>Lives Free from...</i>	<u>Matthew</u>
Anger & Contempt	5:21-26
Domination by Sexual Lust & Disgust	5:27-32
Desire to Dominate & Control Verbally	5:33-37
Grudges, Fairness Issues & Paying Back	5:38-42
to Love Enemies & Bless the Cursing	5:43-48
Performing for Human Credit	6:1-18
Physical Substance	6:19-34
Condemnation Engineering	7:1-12
Community of Prayerful Love	7:13-23
Discerning	
Hear and Do	7:24-27
We've established a culture of hearing and not doing.	[30:10]

Matthew 5 - Blessedness in the Beatitudes

[30:35]

This is a Master Teacher who knows exactly what He is doing therefore there is a reason he orders the things the way He does. That's why he opens with...

The issue of "Who is Blessed?" - Determines how one behaves. We act for what is good in our eyes. The first thing He discusses is, "Who is well off?"

Shocking statements He made - "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the Earth." Often thought to not apply to me and you. Put on your bathroom mirror, "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the Earth." Where you are, if you are not the light, there is not going to be any light. That's your calling.

You have to understand the Beatitudes are taking the list of the humanly un-blessable and announcing that they too can be blessed in the Kingdom of God. If you don't understand that, you won't know the connection when He announces to very ordinary people, "*You are the salt of the Earth.*"

* Salt was a rock compound not pure salt but block that salt could be leached out of it. Salt in the shaker is pure salt. Salt in New Testament days was not pure salt.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on the hill can't be hidden."

To be the light of the world all you have to do is be the light of the world. You don't need to make an effort to be seen. No matter how dark it gets, darkness can not put out a light. Asymmetry between light & darkness. Light expels darkness. Darkness does not expel light. The darker it gets, the brighter the light shines. That is true of a disciple of Jesus. That's why when it gets dark, you can be proud and thankful to be a disciple of Jesus. You can be assured you don't have to announce that you are shining. You just shine.

One of the things Jesus is telling us is that we can put God in charge of our public relations. If we have the real stuff, it can not be hid. ***True ecumenism among Christians is obedience to Christ.***

We can have people who work next to each other for years who go to church and our professing Christians and never find out that are Christians. You might be tempted to say if you have a spiritual life that can be hidden, maybe it should be.

If you are the light of the world, where you are is your appointment. God foresaw for you from the foundation of the world. That's a part of what's built into the idea of the Kingdom of God. You did not take God by surprise. He foresaw the world in which you would be born and the family. He had you in mind for that place from the foundation of the world. That's your place to be the light of the world. How are you going to be the light of the world? **You will be the light of the world by living out the Kingdom of God in that place. You bring the Kingdom of God into that place and you let it work.** The form will be - you will be a person who

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does the right thing because you are a person of love and you live a faith in God that allows you to know if you do the right thing, God will stand with you. That's one of the things you learn as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You never have to do anything wrong.

People want to be good but there are ready to do what is wrong if necessary. When do people say, "*Business is business*"? When they're getting ready to do something wrong. They are going to say, "We have to do it." The Christian will always say, "*Business is never just business.*" There is a popular idea that you can't do business in a godly way. Because you are going to come to the point of where, "*Business is business.*" That means you are now prepared to trust your own devices and not God. At that point, the light diminishes. And everyone says, "*Really, you're just like everybody else.*"

"*They may see your good works and say you are really wonderful...*" Did I misread that verse? No, "*they will see your Father in Heaven.*" They won't see the light of the Father when we do what is outright wrong. It is when we stand in the world and say blessed are those who are facing unemployment, not because unemployment is good but because they too can live in the Kingdom of God even if unemployed, facing bankruptcy, shutting down the business.

You have to have that solidly in place. The order of the Sermon is fundamental. Anyone who doesn't know where their Blessedness is in the Kingdom of God is not going to go beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees. This is crucial to the order. Otherwise, you won't be able to deal with anger. You won't act without contempt if you find someone contempt-able [unbless-able.] They may be in the category of the salt that has had its saltiness washed out of it. Human beings can not restore that but God can. That's crucial to understand this order.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 10 @ 42:50** ~ ~ ~

~ 11 **Kingdom Living - Matthew 5:21-48**

[1:21:00]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBBB9G6WW3w>

1st - Lives Free from Anger & Contempt

5:21-26

This is an intelligent man giving an intelligent address to fundamental issues. On the assumption Jesus was smart and new what He was talking about... Why does he start with anger? Anger is the most fundamental problem in human life if you are aiming to transform people. You have to start there.

Jesus is not writing a theory. He is founding a community of redemption. His project is to change people. The theory of love & laws are developing. That's not going to help a person in the guts of life caught up in their anger. You won't do well unless you've dealt with anger & contempt first. These statements of Jesus are ordered in a fundamental way.

Anger...

... is not wrong but very likely to lead to wrong. (Titus 1:7; I Co. 13

... is will to harm. That's why you already feel hurt when someone is angry at you. We don't even like to be honked at.

...announces something needs to be changed. Anger is a kind of pain.

...is the will to push, move, harm. Being angry sets us on a course to harm.

Ecc. 7:9, "Anger reposes in the bosom of fools." Find a fool and find anger.

We need to think deeply about the nature of anger. Cross my will and I'm given to unrestrained anger and I will strike out. It is an insult to my kingdom. My will is being crossed. "The smallest thing will set them off." You have a will in a certain condition.

...is not a sin. It is natural like pain but only rock solid Christian character can keep you safe with anger. God got angry. Jesus got angry. I can trust Jesus with stuff I wouldn't trust myself with.

...is not the best way to handle situations. Anger evokes anger. Not talking about repressing anger or denying anger. We're talking about not being angry.

If War is necessary, in some circumstances anger & contempt are not. Warfare conducted in anger & contempt is many times worse.

Everything you can do with anger you can do better without it. Living without anger is a way of re-educating people around you.

...is dangerous because it's always righteous in the moment. Rarely are we angry without feeling like we are completely justified. Angry feelings don't raise the question, "Am I right?" Thoughts & beliefs do that. Feelings say, "I want this!"

...is in our body. We farm our character out to our body. We will act in anger before we think.

Mean Christians. Where do you train as a Christian to deal with anger?

"Angry...Raca...You fool...fires of Gehenna (not Hades)."

Jesus is putting a pretty heavy weight on stepping out of anger. The reason we have so many angry Christians because they are not trained out of it.

Anger - Stepping out of Anger

[21:05]

Since anger is a "Will Phenomenon", that is where you have to begin.

Stepping out of anger presupposes you have surrendered your will to God. You don't have to have your way. Surrender to the will of God effects a pervasive change in all of our lives.

This is the meaning of the Cross in spiritual growth and redemption. Jesus did not die on the Cross not that we would not have to die on the Cross but that we would join him in His death on the Cross. *"I am crucified with Christ."*

What does that mean? I have given up my life to God. I have laid it down.

* William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* [23:15]

If you complain, it is because you lack a rightful view of God.

The greatest saint in the world is He who is always thankful to God who wills what God wills and receives everything as an instance of God's goodness and has a heart always ready to praise God for it. All [devotions] are so many means to render the soul to the will of God and fill it with with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God.

What about things that are wrong?

[25:50]

Speak truth and live it but we don't do it with anger & contempt because we know that He is taking care of us. Our interests are safe. [Kingdom living]

- If you confront without anger, he may get angry. You remain calm.
- If you confront with anger, it provokes more anger that feels justified.
- You entered a relationship with the person you confront.

You have to understand anger to get out of it. You have to understand people who are angry.

You are being called to *Responsible Humanity* - You think in terms of relationships not acts, much less tit for tat.

* Firing someone in Christian love

You maintain the relationship as part of recognizing the care of God and the supervision. As angry as I may be, in a sober moment I realize God loves that person. If I'm going to relate to that person, I have to recognize God cares for that person and cares for me.

With this in place, not getting what you want is not a big deal. Anger always comes when you make it a big deal. If it has meaning other than "I want my way." Without anger, we don't evoke the angry emotions from the other side. You get some anger from others but you stand steady and let them work their way out.

That's the meaning of **The Cross** - "There is life outside this event."

The disciple of Jesus living in the Kingdom has learned no matter what the event is, there is life outside the event.

Contempt - Twin of Anger; Find one and the other is close by. [33:16]

Contempt = Regard one as less worthy or worthless. It is easier to harm them or be angry at them.

* Racial conflict - The other race is worthy of contempt or harm.

Less likely to grieve over them or help them. "They deserve it."

Filthy language is always an expression of contempt. Makes anger easy.

Built into the nature of anger is to flow into contempt.

Living Without Contempt - The answer to contempt is love. You can't have contempt for things that you love. We can give up the right to have contempt for people. You can give up the "right to be contempt, to be anger." A moment of spiritual growth is when we give up the right to be angry. I can abandon contempt. I will have to learn to act against wrong without being angry.

- Study "Anger" and "Angry" in the Biblical context. If it's not Biblical, we don't want it. The Bible is a window on life. You study it and it emerges from it the profound teachings that we need. You won't study it unless you believe Jesus and others teach us to lay aside anger.

[I abandon anger and contempt by surrendering my will, my future, my relationships, my way, my feelings, my wishes, my fears, my control by putting Jesus kingdom first and trusting Him for my entire life, destiny and eternity.]

The Positive Side of Anger & Contempt - Mt. 5:24-26 [39:33]

Jesus is contrasting the right attitude to the wrong attitude.

Teaches the kind of thing the person who has the right attitude will do.

* 1st Case - Interrupt the process of the ritual.

There is always a tendency in religious institutions to glorify the processes to such an extent that people wind up substituting ritual behavior for moral rightness.

Jesus is going counter to that. He is suggesting an outrageous thing. You would interrupt a ritual in the temple to do something "trivial" like go to make things right with your brother. He is saying that to show what it is really like to not just not kill your brother but to really love. The tendency to substitute ritual behavior for genuine goodness & rightness.

* 2nd Case - A new type of friendship - Mt. 5:25 [43:57]

- Make friends quickly with an opponent in a law suit.

A further illustration of the genuine heart of a kingdom person so far from killing them that if they go to court, they are friendly. Doesn't say you should not go to court, but you go to court in love. You be friendly. "Give him your coat also."

If you pull anger & contempt out of immoral action, how much is left?

Jesus understood the structure of the immoral life. He pulls the foundations out from under it.

2nd - Free from Domination of Lust, Disgust & Adultery 5:27-30 [48:00]

Jesus moves on to sexuality after focusing on anger & contempt. Often people who lead but also lust are religious leaders who would commit adultery if they had the occasion and were not fearful of what would happen. If they were not angry and unsatisfied with their wives, they would not be looking elsewhere.

Accurate language - "looks to lust" not "looks and lusts"

You need to distinguish **1) "thought of sin" from 2) "inclination to sin" is temptation and 3) "readiness to sin"**.

Adultery in the heart is #3. It is not temptation. It is not thought. Adultery in the heart is manifested by cultivating desire. When you "look to lust" you "look in order to lust" not just having to but inciting to purposefully to enjoy dwelling on it.

Why does one do that? For the most part it is a habit. It feels good. We enjoy imagining what we might like to do even if we wouldn't do them. Habit of indulging feeling becomes a major part of how we get through life. "Turn to the body" (Romans 1) as a source of gratification and good feeling.

* Anger & contempt 'feel' good. It gives a kick back effect of feeling superior. It's all a part of the sensualistic approach to life where feelings are treasured. People live in imagination because they enjoy that. People are not experiencing success & drama in their life so they get it out of sex & violence.

How do we leave "cultivating lust"?

[53:00]

Make the decision to go no further than #1. You train yourself to avoid #1 as much as possible. If it happens, it is not a sin. It is not wrong. Move away from it.

1.) Decide to do it. It's not the law of gravity that you can not escape it. You don't have to be drawn into it. Your world is soaked with it. Recognize that and decide I'm not going to be a part of that.

2) The discipline of 'chastity' is more the outcome of the discipline. You can train yourself to simply avoid them for periods of time. You can avoid thoughts for a period of time. You can train yourself to think about life & relationships that doesn't involve sexuality. You have to break habits that run in the other direction.

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3) It will help you if you decide to view others as *"unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."* Your view of them will be lifted in such a way that you will not have the same inclinations in relationship to them. This condition can be called "sexual purity" - not enslaved or accustomed to degrading yourself or others. Does not mean you are asexual. [Love not Lust]

4) Train ourselves to take initial signs you use to use to get ready to cultivate lustful thoughts to bless, help, pray for the person in question. As you engage in these, you won't have trouble with the others but you have to train yourself to do it. Learning to see people as unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's great universe opens the door to these other things. Using the customary signals to turn the other way and we can train ourselves to turn the other way.

[57:20] Since we have already surrendered self will - getting what you want - you won't feel deprived. ["My kingdom come" is gone.]

Many conclude, "I'm missing something good." You have to get out of that. You're not missing something good. You're missing something that is harmful and can lead to worse things.

Surrender of self will has to lay the foundation not only for anger but ceasing to cultivating lusting. It all hangs together.

As Christians, we train ourselves and train others we are discipling in these areas. We don't treat anger, contempt, sexuality as peeled grapes impossible to pick up. We've thought about it and teaching about it.

It may have struck us that Jesus actually has something to teach us about it. We are ready to act. We begin to take steps to change the mind, will and feelings in such a way we are able to do the things Jesus said.

We have to grow in **grace** by our own actions as well as receive the grace from God. [II Peter 3:18]

We don't say, *"Oh I failed again. I'll try harder next time."* We say, "How did that happen?" We go through the stages. The Vision - "It's OK if I don't engage in that." Then the stage of Decision - "I'm going to be that way." Then we get into the Details: We do whatever is necessary to become a different person

Agape love is the sure answer to lust. What you love you'll treat lovingly.

Disciplines - Principle of Indirection

[1:00:50]

Becoming a different person inside. You engage the disciplines not to modify the behavior. You aim at changing the inside. When the inside is changed, the behavior changes. Disciplines enable us to do what we can't do by direct effort.

You can't stop cultivating lusting by trying to stop cultivating lusting.

You have to change from the inside.

Habit change - we go into solitude, silence, practice worship that change the attitudes that lead us into degrading positions.

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Worship - "*Astonished reverence for God*" - is so important. [1:02:49]
Worship exalts God and the back effect is to change us.
When you live in worship, it changes you
* John Wesley Hymn

Study has to go with worship to change the mind. **Psalm 16:8** No longer driven by feelings, hunger, needs because you are centered in the sufficiency of God.

* Story from a woman fasting & solitude [1:05:25]

3rd - Free from Divorce - 5:31-32 [1:08:00]

If you have dealt with anger & contempt and cultivated lusting, there's not going to be much of a problem because divorce without anger, contempt & cultivated lusting will almost never occur. Normally they come out of those conditions.

4th - Lives Free from Desire to Dominate & Control Verbally 5:33-37

Do not swear falsely; Let Yes be Yes

{See p. 65 - #9 - Church Communities - 1:11:00-1:24:30}

5th - Lives Free from Grudges, Fairness Issues & Paying Back 5:38-42

"Eye for an Eye" restricts revenge.

If you have taken care of these earlier issues, you are ready to deal with retaliation

"Don't resist those who are evil" is talking about a personal relationship. Don't resist them in the way they are attacking you. If someone slaps you, don't slap them back. Remain vulnerable to them.

If you are a person operating out of your own anger & desires, you won't be able to do that. "I'll turn the other cheek then I'll knock his head off."

Not legalistically, "Jesus said go the 2nd mile."

Think of the Spirit of Jesus, the realities of the Kingdom and how this works and then these things go into place.

6th-Heart Able to Love Enemies & Bless those Who Curse 5:43-48 [1:11:11]

"Hate your enemy" is not in the original law. It was added by the time of Jesus.

Love your enemies so you can have the nature of your Father in Heaven.

He reigns on evil & good, rains on righteousness & unrighteousness.

How am I going to do all this? [1:12:35]

We can't if we are living on our own resources and all we know is controlling things so that they come out the way we want them. If we have abandoned that, there will be cases where people will ask you for something who have no claim on you and you will give to them based on their need. Giving based just on need is a

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characteristic of people who have learned to live in the Kingdom of God. Will you make a law of it? I hope not.

You do not abandon your responsibility to make a judgment about what you have to do and foist on these teachings a legalism that says you always do exactly that. There will be occasions when you do this, probably most occasions. But there will be times when you don't do it because love obliges you to do something different.

* Self defense is legitimate but not just to defend yourself.

You don't hit him just because he hit you.

The only alternative will be to turn these into laws and they will paralyze you because you don't know what to do. Often they will force you into conflict. These are practical teachings that contradict the prevailing assumptions such as - *You don't give to people just because they ask you. You give to people because they have a prior claim on you. You hit people back because they hit you.* Jesus says that's not the way it goes. Jesus is contradicting the prevailing assumptions.

* Don't take the seat of honor. Don't invite your relatives to your party.

For the child of the kingdom, there will be many circumstances in which you will go contrary to these assumptions because you are alive in the kingdom.

This is a hard lesson. We keep wanting Jesus to tell us what to do. We try to make a rule out of Jesus' teaching. You can't catch the reality of the kingdom in a set of rules.

* Grandma said, "Do not call people fools." I won't say it. I'll just think it.

If you make these rules of righteousness, you will always fail, they will become impossible to do and you make Jesus look like he is an idiot.

If on the other hand you understand he is talking about having a certain kind of heart which may well out of love go exactly contrary to what is treated as righteousness such as "Go the 2nd mile if you have to. Don't hit someone unless they hit you then you can hit them back. Don't give to people who have no claim on you. If you have an enemy, hate them real good."

That's not where you are living when you live in the Kingdom of God

Matthew 5:48 - "*Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" [1:19:25]

"Teleoi" does not mean legal perfection but functional completeness to function in love and in kingdom reality as your Father in Heaven does.

Does not refer to legal righteous in perfect adherence to the law. Give up on that one. You'd never do that and if you did, you'd be overwhelmed with pride. Being perfect is growing into "*the fullness of humanity in Christ*" **Ephesians 4:13**

* A perfect child * A perfect teenager

As people grow, they are perfect all along the line,

...though they have much growing to do

—> A kind of purpose driven completeness that Jesus is talking about.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 11 @ 1:21:00** ~ ~ ~

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd4_PKVvtVY

Jesus Teaching

He didn't preach sermons as we would understand them but he did have unified discourses. He had people think about it. "Maybe sometimes you should not resist evil." What do you gain if you take his eye? You need your eye. I care about you.

Jesus' teachings are designed to draw you off your familiar ground.

They push you out of the ordinary human actions and put you in a different basis.

- * If you slap me and I slap you, we know where to go from there. If you slap me and I don't slap you, then what do we do? Now we have to rethink the whole situation.

["Loving kindness leads to repentance." When someone is kind in the face (slapped face) of a mean spirit, it stops the offender in their tracks and makes them re-think what they were thinking. It "leads them to repentance" = thinking about their thinking. Metanoeto = "Reflect differently after with".]

- * If someone asks for something they need, they will give you a song and dance. They will try to cook up something that will hook you in and get you to answer their request. Suppose you said, "No, you don't need to that. You ask for it, you need it, I have it, I can give it to you." No song and dance.

[Imagine how this would redesign fund raising]

You are rewriting all the scripts human beings have worked up for managing their way and getting what they want. Now you step outside of that and say there is a bigger thing going on here [the Kingdom] than you getting what you want. You introduce them to that by how you respond to them.

- * If someone wants to sue you - That's going to shift the ground on which we stand. I sued you, I took one of your garments by process of law. You need some clothing. The human way is, "No, I'm not going to give you anything." You are not standing on human ground, you're standing somewhere else. You give them the 2nd garment.

You don't force your second garment onto them. You have to supply the context of the need of someone who has sued you by the process of law. You're operating out of the Kingdom of love and if it is appropriate, you would give it to them even though they had sued you and taken away your other garment.

This is a large shift not picking over a bunch of little laws. The laws given won't cover the expanse of real life.

There is not a single situation you have to deal with that is not affected by a shift into the Kingdom.

You have to learn to read this rightly or it'll drive you nuts. You'll go crazy trying to keep these laws. They are not laws. They are an expression of a kind of life. You get this kind of life and then these are characteristics - kinds of things you

will see happening. They will all have the mark of not obeying the usual human way of manipulating and controlling kingdoms. That's what you're stepping out of.

This is the heart of the matter. It all comes down to the day to day little things where we have to make decisions and the choice is who are we going to be - *our* kingdom people or *God's* kingdom people.

Matthew 6

[8:00]

Part I - Reputation - Mt. 6:1-18 - Not Performing for Human Consumption
Not trying to do things because it will impress people.

Church - This is one of the biggest problems in our churches. Performing to impress people. Often it is done for good ends. We want people coming back because they want to enjoy a good service. **The object of the service is not to have people to enjoy it. The object of the service to bring them closer to Christ and more fulfilled in the kind of life that is in Christ. To bring people to God, to honor God, to worship God.**

When you watch people get into consuming services and judging them as good or bad, you suddenly realize very often the mode of being that church services have is "theater" - a performance is being put on. That becomes very grinding to the people who realize they have to put on a performance.

One of the things we have to do if we are going to use our times together as disciples of Jesus if it is going to be profitable is to reject the idea that we are performing.

Three main areas that are apt to be performance:

[10:20]

1. Alms - "*Practicing your righteousness to be noticed by men*"

The problem is not being noticed but doing things TO BE noticed.

[Similar to "looks to lust" condition of the heart.]

This is human kingdom stuff - I'm running my show.

"The Discipline of Secrecy" - doing things in ways they are not noticed.

To break the habit of needing to be noticed.

Nothing good about being secret in or inherently bad being noticed.

Free you up from being dependent on approval or disapproval of others.

That helps break the habit of needing to be observed.

2. Praying - To be seen of men

[13:35]

3. Fasting

A break from a fast might be a mercy from God to keep you humble.

Disciplines are not righteousness. They are not law, they are wisdom

We fast unto Him not unto people.

The purpose of fasting is to align ourselves with the Kingdom of God. It is not to convince God He ought to do what we want.

*"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by everything that proceeds from the mouth of God."*

"My meat is to do the will of the Father." He was telling the truth.

Fasting is *feasting* on another world. Fasting affirms the reality of another world and draws on it to nourish one's body and give one strength. (Deut. 8)

* Pharisees - Mt. 23 - *"They do all that they do to be seen of men."*

If humans are the ones making your work go, they'll always be involved. We need them but they are not what we trust. **We trust God. We count on His Kingdom to be present with us.** This frees us from the need to please human beings. *"Fear of man brings a snare."* (Proverbs 29:25) If one is living in dependence upon humans beings, there is a natural fear that they will desert you. The person who lives from the kingdom of God does not depend on people.

Money/giving - We don't give to the church because the church needs it. We give to the church because of what God is doing. In our needs we don't look to people we look to God. They give so they can participate in the work of the Kingdom that you are engaged with. In your needs, you do not look to them, you look to God. **The Kingdom steps in and takes care of you.** Others will share the blessing you have as a servant of the Lord.

Part II - Wealth - Mt. 6:19-34 - Not Trusting Money & Physical [21:10]

How do you lay up a treasure in heaven? - God, Christ, Holy Spirit, People

Col. 3, "Seek those things that are above" - God and His kingdom

"Treasures in Heaven" means investing in God and perhaps in other people who are going there. Make your treasure God and He takes care of you, He provides the money. If you put your treasure in money, that's where your heart will be and your heart will be divided. You'll be looking at God and looking at money and not know which one to trust. We have to lay down our dependence upon money. We do not trust the sources of money that lie outside of God. We do not put ourselves in charge of that and have to make it work.

The irony of it all - this is the way to escape anxiety. You can't escape anxiety any other way that what Jesus says about not performing and not trying to amass resources that will enable you to survive. The only way to stop being anxious is to lay that down. You recognize the care of God. You experience it as you go along. Sometimes you need to look back and see how it happened because we so easily forget.

Practice "The Discipline of Celebration" - Enjoying things in memory of the good God has done for us. (See *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.) "Counting your blessings."

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"The person who really trusts God is no more worried about the future than he is about the past." (Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*) None of us sits up at night worrying about what's going to happen yesterday>

You are in the presence of God who has provided in the past. The abundant care of God for others. You may ask for money. You may work. You don't worry because you're not trusting yourself or your money but the God who provides.

"For this reason, (God is in charge of money and reputation) don't be anxious" (Mt. 6:25)...for your life, for what you have to live on. It will come. In the Lord's Prayer - *"Give us our daily bread for today (not for tomorrow)."*

God is going to be there tomorrow like He is here today. Hard to move into this because so many of us have very little experience with it - not having the resources when we need them and then there they are. We trust God day by day for the things we need and we go ahead doing the things we believe He wants us to do and the things He wants us to be. We count on Him for the provision. That is what Jesus is talking about here. He is saying this is serious business. Look at the length of the material.

This is the only way you can live in faith in the goodness of God. You have to turn loose how you appear and turn loose gathering resources to depend upon where you are the one in charge.

{Mt. 6:33 -p. 27 #3@1:11; Mt. 6:25-34 - p. 29 #4 @ 25:00}

Matthew 7:1-12 - The Non Condemning Community of Prayer [29:40]

7:1-5 Condemnation

One of the most challenging passages in the sermon as it has been given to us. They are about trying to get people to do things. They do that by condemnation. It's nearly always trying to get others to do good things. You come on to people, especially relatives. It's the heavy hammer to get them to do the right thing. Lay on the condemnation like we might lay on a whip trying to drive people into doing the right thing. Everyone knows that it just doesn't work.

Condemnation - A way of distancing people and putting them down. A form of disrespect, of contempt. Test it against the facts. Have you ever been condemned? Isn't it true you felt being put down? Less than you felt you were? Condemnation is not the same as **discernment** which is essential to human life.

* Dentist diagnosing a decayed tooth is discernment

But if he started slapping you and said,

"Who do you think you are to treat your teeth this way?" Condemnation

Discernment is essential in human life. Judgment is an expressed condemnation, an element of superiority, even contempt.

Jesus understood when you come with condemnation, you get it right back. Watch how that works in **families**. We've had a whole generation predicated on what Jesus is talking about here. The 60's generation discerned and condemned the older generation. The effect was counter-condemnation. It's a very serious

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problem - inter-generational conflict based on judging. Jesus is talking about a harmful attitude addressed to another often breaks over into anger.

* Politics - Level of judging. We need discerning politicians

How do you break the cycle? Try not judging. You can still use discernment.

* Today if you say a sexual practice is wrong, that is branded as hate speech. It may not be hate speech. You can not "discern" because it will be treated as judgment. We can't say, "I really love you and want to help you but you are wrong" because saying you're wrong says, "I don't love you, I condemn you" and you see the confusion.

What Jesus is saying to lay aside the attitude of condemnation like anger.

Anything you can do with anger you can do much better without it. I suggest to you the "log" is the attitude of condemnation. You have to get the log out. Once the log is out, you can see to remove the speck. That's the move from condemnation to discernment. Specks are not good things. You need help to get it out. Jesus is saying if you have the log of judgmentalism and condemnation in your eye, you won't be able to help people.

This passage teaches ways we try to help people that don't work. He's mainly addressing ways of taking a superior attitude. Once condemnation is out, people will allow you to help. If people are convinced you are not condemning them, they will allow you to help them in many cases where they wouldn't even begin to if they think you are coming in with an attitude of condemnation.

"Dogs & Hogs" (Matthew 7:6)

[41:00]

"Do not give what is holy to the dogs."

People who read this tend to concentrate on people who are "dogs" or "hogs". Thinking there are certain categories of people who are unworthy of your help. That should not waste your time on them. That might be true but I would be very careful with that. I don't think Jesus is classifying people as dogs. What He is talking about is what people can profit from and not profit from.

Dogs - If you lay your Bible down for a hungry dog, what will happen? The dog can not eat the Bible. That leaves the dog hungry. If you keep giving the dog the Bible, the dog will starve & die. Don't blame the dog. Dogs don't eat Bibles.

Hogs - They can not digest pearls.

[44:05]

But you say, *"they are very good pearls!"* So what, that doesn't help.

* Hogs will eat people. Jesus is teaching a very poignant truth about people. If you keep pushing stuff that people can not receive and does not help them, they are going to hurt you.

This is a passage about how to help people and not try to help people.

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To help people we have to be close enough to them and love them enough to find out what will really benefit them.

John 3:17, *"I did not come into the world to condemn the world."*

Religious people relied on condemnation to get people to change. I don't think I've ever seen anyone helped by being condemned.

We use un-forgiveness to get people to stop. It's a means of hazing people into doing the right thing. If I forgive, you might never stop. If I'm unforgiving, maybe you'll stop. Have you ever seen it work? I see more and more anger coming out of the situation. Jesus knew that it didn't work.

We have to get out of trying to make things happen. We try a different approach. It doesn't mean we let what is wrong go or ignore people who need help. This is not what Jesus is talking about. We are expected to help people. Jesus is teaching we can find a way of helping people that is not judgmental, that does not keep giving them good stuff that does them no good because they are not in position to digest it. There is a better way.

[Not managing others by condemnation engineering]

Matthew 7: 7-11

Community of Prayerful Love

[48:45]

"We're talking about prayer but not all prayer is to God."

If you want to help people, ask them, talk to them, seek, but don't go at it in a condemning way. You can be persistent but not condemning and not persisting in using over and over things the person you're dealing with can not benefit from.

"Ask...Seek...Knock."

Remind ourselves - Jesus does not teach by giving us an absolute universal formula that will always bring down the result. He teaches by contradicting the practice in the first verses of the chapter. He says stop trying to manipulate people and go directly to them and ask. You can stay with them. You can do it in a way to have to hear that you are there. You can be a real presence. That is the way human beings are built to work.

v. 9 - **Parent/child relationship**. He is opening up a great cosmic theme of asking as a world order under God

"When a child asking for a loaf, will give him a stone."

"Asking" is a great power. People will avoid someone begging. It goes right to the heart of who you are.

* Ever eat a sandwich in front of a dog? The dog is asking for food. How do you feel? You'll either leave the room or give the dog some of your sandwich.

Jesus turns to the simple relationship between a man and his son.

* Daughters are even more powerful...on men.

A daughter asks for a loaf and she'll get a cake! Guys get a biscuit.

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It is so beautiful to see Jesus dip into the realities of human life as God has made them and bring out the teaching.

"If you then being evil know how to give good gifts...how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?" (v. 11) [53:35]

What's the continuum being human beings and God? When I go to Ask, Seek, Knock of human beings, I don't condemn them or try to manipulate them, I take God with me and bring Him into the circuit of Asking, Seeking & Knocking. When I come to request, I am simultaneously involving God in that.

PRAYER is "asking". Look at the teachings of Jesus. It's all about asking. Your relationship to God is not all about asking. Have a relationship with God that is greater than asking. People who don't understand prayer and the kingdom misunderstand asking the Father for our needs. Children ask. Dogs ask.

* Children are not afraid to ask. They also curl up in your lap and say *"I love you, Daddy"* not to get something they want but just because they love you.

Our relationship to God is much bigger than prayer. But prayer is fundamentally asking and receiving and living in a relationship where that happens.

Now, when I go to my friend, neighbor, I don't go to manipulate them, I go to ask, and as I ask, I ask God and bring God into the operation.

We have two ways of getting things done. Sometimes what we are after is so big, it can not be left to us. [[2 Types of Causation: On my own and needing help](#)]

Lessons on Prayer

[57:30]

* Simon Peter - **Luke 22:31-38**

"Satan demanded permission to sift you like wheat". (v. 31)

This teaches us Jesus and Satan were talking all along. Satan left for a season and came back to talk to Jesus.

"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and you, when once you have returned again, will strengthen your brothers." (v. 32)

Jesus prayed for him. He could have stopped him but he didn't stop him.

Most things we are concerned about in human relationships are too big for us to do on our own. That's why there is an arrangement of prayer.

* Weeds in your flower bed? Better not pray about that, you can pull those. Don't need to ask God to send an angel, do spiritual warfare. Just pull them!.

* If a brother is addicted, That's too much. Better pray about that one. Get God involved in that one. He knows what's going on. He knows what needs to be done in the right way and what can't be done.

* Someone unsaved? It's OK to talk to them. Don't try to manipulate them or grind them into the Kingdom of God by condemnation or pearls you have found because they can't possibly use. Go to God. Ask, Seek, Knock and go to them with God, not on your own. That's why there is such an arrangement as prayer.

What is Prayer? Talking to God about what we are doing together. [1:01:40]
[Prayer: Grace in words through a relationship we do together, not on my own]

Prayer is a way of engaging with God and bringing something to pass.
Prayer is staying with something. Pray, and keep praying. Stay with them.

Prayer is staying in action with the Kingdom of God.

* Power steering - You touch the wheel and the power takes over.
Benedictine "*When you're working, you're praying*". Praying is actually working.
Prayer is getting involved with the Kingdom of God and staying there.

Jesus' Teachings on Prayer - Matthew 6, Luke 11 & 18 [1:04:50]

Prayer works by bringing to bear the action of the one who is praying. When you pray for something, you really get involved with it and you stay there. You pour out your energy in prayer. As you do that, you will begin to see things happen. They won't necessarily be just what you had in mind. If you ask for a stone but you really want is bread, probably you'll get bread if you need something to eat. That's where the Kingdom of God takes over and directs the prayer. Jesus' teaching is always predicated on the idea that praying is asking. You get involved and stay there.

"Men ought always to pray and not give up." **Luke 18**

* The Widow and the Unjust Judge - The power of asking.

The widow's a nobody and the Judge is one mean guy, but he is a judge. The little lady has no pull on him. All she can do is ask. "*I'm going to give her the request lest she wear me out with her frequent coming.*" This somehow applies to God. We stay involved.

* The Man with the Unexpected Guest - **Luke 11** [1:07:20]

Simply the power of the request. The term is "shamelessness" of the request. Like a dog begging, no shame whatsoever. The man keeps standing there until the man inside gets up and gives him what he asked for.

This is one of the deepest teachings on the nature of the universe and God and prayer is the way that you enter into to it.

When you do that, you transform everything in the community. No longer a battle of will against will. It's a process of coming to grips with things that are needed and things that needs to be said. We put our requests in the context of our overall walk with God. Then our business is His business and His business is our business. That's the way we learn to stay in prayer in the community of love.

In asking - I recognize and welcome God's presence. I make myself present to Him. It's presence of one person to another. When I go to a brother, I just ask. I make myself present to him. What you observe is that they will not make

themselves present to you because they are hiding. The pressure is still there. You bring that under God. You wait on God to move. That's the context of change.

That's what prayer is about. Prayer is a way allowing us to count. Prayer is a special arrangement so human beings can be free and significant.

There is a lot of theology that can be harmful and you have to work through here. The basic practical issue - Does God ever do anything in answer to prayer that He did not intend to do in the first place? Or, does He not do things He intended to do in answer to prayer.

In the end, it comes down to this - Does your prayer make any difference or is it just mood adjustment like a cocktail hour?

The real issue is - Is the universe the kind of universe in which there is more to be done as a result of our prayers than just what would happen anyway?

The Strange Arrangement of Prayer

[1:12:15]

The arrangement allows us to be involved in what God is doing and make a difference. **Giving & Prayer are the two baby steps in learning to act in the Kingdom.** Prayer & giving are the opportunities for the youngest and smallest to make a contribution that God can act with. **Acting with God is the secret of life in the Kingdom of God.**

This arrangement allows one to step right in and begin to work without allowing you to hurt yourself. That's what we do in teaching and growing and every aspect of life with young people. We try to arrange things where they can begin to get involved without being hurt or hurting others and they grow and learn and they become more and more capable.

* **Luke 21**- Widows 2 mites - Jesus is watching people put in their gifts.

Why does Jesus pull out Widows so often? Widows had the least going for them in human terms. "Blessed are the widows."

"She has put in more than all the others."

Is it true? Did she put in more?

- *"Little is much if God is in it."* Bob Pearce, World Vision founder

That's the insight you need to understand the teaching of Jesus. The widow did put in more because it was with God. The total of what came in for the Kingdom of God with her two mites was greater than what came in with all the others.

The Lord's Prayer...in Kingdom language The Divine Conspiracy, 269 [1:16:00]

"Our Father always near us,
may your name be treasure and loved,
may your rule be completed in us—
may your will be done on earth
in just the way it is done in heaven.
Give us today the things we need today,
and forgive us our sins and impositions on you
as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us.
Please don't put us through trials,
but deliver us from everything bad.
Because you are the one in charge,
and you have all the power,
and the glory too is all yours—forever—
which is just the way we want it."

"Our Father, who are it Heaven". Most people mean "way off & way later"

Means - "Our Father, always near us." Heavens are accessible to everyone and everyone to the heavens.

"Hallowed" - May your name be treasured and loved.

"Your Kingdom" - May your rule be completed in us.

"Please don't put us through trials. Deliver us from anything bad."

This is a child's prayer. Ask to not be put through trials.

"Amen" means, "That's just the way we want it." "Let it be that way."

Might want to say "Whoopie!"

Prayer opens up the Kingdom and makes it possible for us to be present to others and present to God in a way that creates a wonderful community of love and non condemnation. That's how we can live together under God in the Kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is talking about.

~ ~ ~ **END of Session 12 @ 1:19:15** ~ ~ ~

~ ~ ~ **Highlights by Topic** ~ ~ ~

~ ~ ~

The Kingdom of God

Jesus taught mainly about the Kingdom of God where the Trinity is King
#1 @ 11:30

If you don't know the Kingdom of God, the human self will is all that is left. The cross is designed to help people see what self will does. What living as one's own king does. Looking at that, recognizing that and turning to God in Christ and giving up one's self will and live in the invisible kingdom of God which is now available.
#1 @ 1:02:00 (p.9)

The crucifixion is the center point of the revelation of the hidden kingdom.
Colossians "reconcile all things to Himself." #1 before 1:00:50

When you live in the Kingdom of Heaven as a disciple of Jesus, you are related to something greater than John the Baptist. Keep that in mind when you are thinking about your nature.
#2 after 1:02:15

That's what presented in the gospels over and over again. The presence of the Kingdom in the presence of the King Jesus. One of the deep sicknesses of our theology is that we preach a Jesus without a Kingdom. #2 before 1:15:20

Live in the Kingdom. Let the results take care of itself. I had to get out of God's way and let the kingdom work and count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom. This is one of the most important things for us to understand if we are to participate in the Divine Conspiracy if as leaders and ministers in the Kingdom to have confidence in the power in the Word of the Kingdom.

If someone wants to find the Kingdom, I should present Jesus to them. I should talk about Him. I should speak about the unspeakable riches of Christ. I should magnify Him and lift Him up and say the wonderful things about Him that are true of Him. That is the way to bring people to the point of understanding the Kingdom and to bring them to the point where they are prepared to enter the Kingdom of God. We must start with the nature of God because it is His kingdom. The Kingdom is a spiritual reality. The Word of the Kingdom is a spiritual reality - a life of it's own. Jesus said they have to eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:62)
3 @ Intro

Kingdom of God - Out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want.
3 @ 26:00

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Christ came to break God's Kingdom out of cultural captivity. Can one be a Christian and not a Jew (which emerged out Antioch of Syria in a group of non-Jewish Gentiles) which expanded to disciples of all nations. The system of mediation was set aside for one simple thing - Jesus. "There is one God and one mediator the man Jesus." All that is required is the presence of Jesus. The Kingdom is present with Him. You have Him, you have the Kingdom. God took the Kingdom of God out of a strictly cultural, institutional setting.

#3 @ 45:00+

The Kingdom of God comes and says, "Enter the Kingdom, live in the Kingdom, allow your lives to count for things that are good, permanent, enduring, lasting forever." That enables one to live on a different plain. That presupposes the Kingdom is real. That is not just imaginary. As you interact with the Kingdom, that carries you, gives you strength, gives you direction and that means power that has to be learned how to deal with.

#3 before 52:30

"The Kingdom is not in word but in power" Corinthians. The Word of the kingdom produces a kind of life or a results. Jesus is living in a personal reality which is the Kingdom of God. That's why we don't have mechanical results. It's personal and relationship.

#3 after 52:30

Conformed into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28ff). The hard things turn to our good when we have a vision of life in the Kingdom. We are carried forward by meaning of the drama of the Kingdom. "Drama" refers to the ups & downs of meaningful existence in the pursuit of good against opposition. Living in the eternal kingdom gives us this framework.

#3 @ 57:30

Kingdom followers do not stand on the Jewish proprieties (see Luke 16:16). They charge in.

#3 after 57:30

The Kingdom of God is manifested by a kind of righteousness or goodness, peace & joy that can only be supernaturally produced. The Kingdom of God is the announcement that God is here that anyone who wants to find Him can come through Jesus Christ and find the Kingdom of God.

#3 before 1:11:00

How do you seek the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33)? Find out what God is doing (the Kingdom) and do that. How? Observe Jesus Christ. Look at Him. Listen to what He said. Watch what He did. Now do that where you are and you will find the Kingdom of God and the kind of righteousness that God has. When you find that everything else you need will be provided.

#3 @ 1:11:00

The understanding was (is) that the Kingdom will be a political, social kingdom.
"Will you restore the kingdom to Israel?"

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One has to be an ontologist - understand "being" to understand the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's ruling, reigning - His governing, His acting. The Kingdom of God is the Person of God and the instrumentalities by which He rules - His Son, Spirit, Angels, His Word, His Church. #4 Intro

The biggest threat to the Kingdom of God is my kingdom and the kingdom of darkness. #4 Intro

You make a disciple by ravishing people with the Kingdom. Once you understand the Kingdom, discipleship is the greatest opportunity you'll have in life.
#4 @ 28:30

A True Disciple is a full time student in the Kingdom of God. #5 @ 21:55

Lift Jesus up in all of His glory and with Him comes the Kingdom because He is a great King. #5 after 30:45

Discipleship = from running our own Kingdom to bringing our whole being into the presence of God often one step & part at a time. #5 @ 45:00

Any work can be done in a spirit of love in the power of the Kingdom. I'm an Apprentice in Kingdom Living. He is the Master in the Kingdom. It's the easy way of living (Mt. 11:28-30) #5 @ 1:00:00

The good news that we can live now in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. I have confidence in Him for everything. I want to be as close to him as possible and learn from Him everything I can. I do believe that all of His commandments are for my benefit. Anything He tells me to do will be for my good. I will be much better off when I do it. You can only understand that if you get the background of the Kingdom. #6 @ 16:55

Why don't we hear the gospel of the kingdom? (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 59)
"I can not remember hearing a sermon on the Kingdom of God. Where has the kingdom been?" Peter Wagner #6 @ 19:25

How do we act with the power in the Kingdom? Prayer and Giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life. We ought always to be undertaking things we can not do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. Counting on God to do big things. #6 @ 25:00 +/-

Walk through the book of Acts and watch how the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus come together. You will see them separate at the beginning and together at the end. Acts put a face to the Kingdom and a Kingdom to the face.

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People did not know what Jesus was talking about when He talked about the Kingdom of God. #6 @ 28:00 +/-

When you invoke the name of Jesus, you can invoke the action of the Kingdom. Col 3:17 - The name of Jesus ties into Kingdom. #6 @ 32:00 +/-

At the end of Acts when Jesus & the Kingdom come together, the face of Jesus has been put on the Kingdom and the Kingdom is presented in terms of the King Jesus. A King always brings a kingdom so they come together. #6 @ 33:00

If Jesus is equal with God and now we have a person that we relate differently. We come to seek the Kingdom in Jesus and live in uncompromising obedience. #6 @ 39:00

Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of Human ranking. God has a different ranking. "First, last. Last, first." #6 @ 40:00 +/-

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in the kingdom of man. The Beatitudes are proclamation of the Kingdom not practices of the saved. The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus. That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus. You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. We have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God. #6 @ 1:06:50

When you track with the law, you begin to draw on the abundance of the Kingdom of God. That is how you seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Everything you need will be provided. If you don't track with it, you won't because you won't be tracking in the abundance of God's provision. #7 @ 40:00+

Transformation as the self as whole is what we look at when we are cultivating and growing the righteousness of the Kingdom. #7 at the End

"Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) That is why there is not boasting in this matter. It is by grace. Boasting disrupts everything in kingdom living. #8 @ 3:00

The gospel is the vision - "Living in the Kingdom of God". #8 @ 19:00

Out of these will come a richness of life in the kingdom that will allow you to do things Jesus said at a walk. All of the struggle and tension will move out of your

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life and you'll understand when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy. My burden is light." (Matthew 11) #8 @ 30:00 +/-

Being saved is not a matter of where you are going but who you are now. You are a participant in the life that Jesus is now living here. That's what salvation is. That all fits together once you start at the right place and keep Jesus at the right place. Keep Jesus central. You see him as King over a Kingdom in which He invites you to live with Him now. #8 @ the End

Gifting given with extraordinary power to accomplish the ends of the Church. Manifestation of the Kingdom power. The Kingdom comes into the Church. People in Leadership are exercising gifts from Christ beyond human ingenuity. #9 @ 7:00

If you are the light of the world, where you are is your appointment. You will be the light of the world by living out the Kingdom of God in that place. You bring the Kingdom in and let it work. You will be a person who will do the right thing because you are a person of love and faith and by faith you do the right thing and God will stand with you. #10 @ 33:00 +

We can't if we are living on our own resources and all we know is controlling things so that they come out the way we want them. If we abandon that, there will be cases where people will ask you for something who have no claim on you and you will give them based on need. Giving based just on need is a characteristic of people who have learned to live in the Kingdom of God. Will you make a law of it? I hope not. #11 @ 1:12:35

For the child of the kingdom, they will be many circumstances in which you will go contrary to these assumptions because you are alive in the kingdom. #11 pre 1:18:00

You can't catch the reality of the kingdom in a set of rules. #11 @ 1:19:00 +/-

There is not a single situation you have to deal with that is not affected by a shift into the Kingdom. #12 Intro

We have to make a decisions and the choice is who are we going to be - our kingdom people or God's kingdom people. #12 @ 7:45

If humans are the ones making our work go, they'll always be involved and we need them but they are not what we trust. We trust God and His kingdom. This frees us from the need to please human beings. "Fear of man brings a

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snare." (Proverbs). The person who lives in the kingdom of God does not depend on people. #12 @ 12:00+

Prayer is staying in action with the Kingdom of God. #12 @ 1:01:40

Giving & Prayer are the two baby steps in learning to act in the Kingdom. Opportunities for the youngest and smallest to make a contribution that God can act with. Acting with God is the secret of life in the Kingdom of God.
#12 @ 1:12:15

The total of what came in for the Kingdom of God with her 2 mites was greater than what came in with all the others. #12 @ 1:15:00

Prayer opens up the Kingdom and makes it possible for us to be present to others and to God in a way that creates a wonderful community of love and non condemnation and that's how we can live together under God in the Kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is talking about. #12 @ 1:19:00

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The Gospel

If you're preaching a gospel that does not mean redemption for your whole life, you haven't got the right one. #4 @ 10:43

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Salvation

Salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on Earth. Of course it involves forgiveness & Heaven afterwards. It is not a question of omitting those, it is a question of making that the whole deal. #6 Intro

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The Divine Conspiracy Purpose

Divine Conspiracy is God's plan and process of overcoming evil with good in human history. #1 @ 15:45

The primary issue in the Divine Conspiracy is Truth - Is it truth or falsehood?
#1 @ 29:55

God's intent for each of us that we become the kind of person whom He can empower to do whatever we want. The real issue - what kind of person am I?
#1 @ 42:30

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The Divine Conspiracy is to overcome evil with good in the grinding process of human nature. #1 @ 58:00 (est.)

Divine Conspiracy means to elicit love & obedience through the development of character so that out of human history comes a certain kind of community that then is going to have a role forever in the universe.
#2 @ 46:50

The Divine Conspiracy is God's aim to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's kingdom by bringing out a world and history wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ Himself.
#2 @ 1:18:00 +/- (end)

Out of God's operation He will bring a group of people who have the quality of the Trinity in terms of their unity in love. Those are the people whom He can empower to do what they want. #3 @ 26:00

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The Challenge for God's People

The greatest challenge facing the church today - do they have knowledge that is essential to human life or is it another wild faith project where you launch yourself into something and pretend you are being delivered? #1 @ 30:00+ (est.)

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead. #2 @ 1:07:00 (est.)

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Human Nature

I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.
#2 @ 1:05:00 + (est.)

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The Church

If it was assumed that the church had essential knowledge of life, without which human beings could live well or live at all, there would be no question of the separation of church and state. It's all predicated on the idea that religion had nothing to say about reality. #1 @ 30:00

The Church is not the Kingdom of God but a peculiar manifestation of the Kingdom of God. #1 @ End

The Church Today - Should it matter?

Q - Why does the New Testament say nothing upon those matters of which the church today spends most of its time?

A - It might be because nearly everything we devote our attention to today doesn't matter. Something else matters. Not the things we spend most of our time thinking about. #9 @ 26:30

How are people going to gather? We have to think in a different way.

Our choice: Natural ways people will be together - or - have them meet in one place. Demographics make it impossible to gather together in today's urban communities. 3-5% reached if you filled all the churches/synagogues once a week. The church has to be located in a different way. People will still meet. We have to think in a different way about what we do as we carry out the mission.

#9 @ 29:45

The primary field of evangelism today is the American Church. The gospel of discipleship and kingdom living needs to be taught in the large array of non-discipleship Christianity. They need to be evangelized. They need to hear the gospel. If we do that, discipleship will naturally emerge. People are not disciples because they have refused it. By and large they have not been invited. An intelligent invitation to be a disciple of Jesus. #9 @ 45:00+ (est.)

It's a real struggle because you are essentially trying to change the understanding that the people have who come and who support financially and by their presence and by their efforts. Tough to negotiate and get through. Recognize the problems but not be detoured from the goal. The goal [of the church] - Leading ourselves and leading others to change to the point that they become people who routinely do the things Jesus said do, not as the exception but as the rule of their life.

#10 @ 5:00

Not Trusting People & Performing for Human Credit (Mt. 6:1-18) is one of the biggest problems in our churches. Often done for good ends. We want people coming back because they enjoy it. The object of the service is not to have people

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to enjoy it. The object of the service to bring them closer to Christ and more fulfilled in the kind of life that is in Christ. To honor God, to worship God. Very often the mode of being that church services have is theater - a performance. That becomes very grinding for the people who have to do it. One of the things we have to do is to reject the idea that we are performing. #12 @ 8:00

Immerse Disciples in the Trinity - Church Services are a primary problem in this whole project. #5 @ 38:10

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Church Growth

Jesus' Plan for Church Growth - If we preach the unsearchable riches of Christ rightly, we are ready to move into that plan. If we do not, we can never go there and we will have to do something else. That is the history of the church, very largely doing something else. You go down through the ages and watch the ebb and the flow and you come up to the present and say, "What are we doing today?"

Go to the scriptures to see what is positively taught about life and reality and put it to the test. That gets us back to "Ground Zero planning". Now we're going to do something following Jesus Christ as if there was no one already there that had to be justified for what they are doing. If you'll do your ground zero planning, it will do the best thing you can for the people who (Christians) are already in the game. Many are good people, sincere people who want to follow Christ. But they are hindered by taking care of a lot of stuff that is irrelevant. One of beauties of the Great Commission is that it strips all of that away. #4 @ the end

Church growth is not more Christians but bigger Christians. #9 @ 12:00 (est.)

Church Growth - Numbers are not to be despised but the truth is you get more numbers when you have this kind of growth than if you don't. The natural process for the spread of the gospel and bringing of people into the body of Christ is one on one contact with individuals who have in them something so strong and so powerful that other people by and large will naturally want it. The ordinary person will, when they see this, this realization of Christ in individuals, they will come. You won't have enough room to hold them. #9 @ 14:10

You're not going to do it by a slick plan for church growth. You are not going to do in an any other way but by your own transformation and that spreading out to other people. That's the only way it works. #10 @ 29:00

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Preaching

Does the gospel I preach make disciples of Jesus or more consumers of religious goods? We have a spectator, nonparticipant, consumer version of Christianity. Not rooted in the body of Christ, personal transformation. Not rooted in the power of G that you can bring to bear and stand as His person and expect the Kingdom of God to make a difference you can never do on your own. #4 @ 1:50:00 (est.)

The Gospel Heard Does not produce Disciples - The central problem is the message preached or at least the one that is heard. The one heard does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples. #5 @ 1:00:40

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Discipleship & Disciplines

Discipleship Confused with Church Involvement - These don't come to transformation into Christlikeness to be what it's supposed to be and do what the church is supposed to do = people progressing to the place where they routinely & easily do what Christ taught us. #5 @ 21:50

Churches have to organize program of spiritual growth around the disciplines. You can not get growth and Christlikeness out of church as usual. There isn't enough there. A couple of hours in church, some giving, isn't enough. You have to plan for more. Making available more intensive experiences. #8 @ 26:00 +

What does this {disciplines} have to do with being saved? Situation in our churches - Discipleship is one thing and being Christian is another. #8 @ 35:40

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The Ministry

Mark 4:26-29 - "All by itself" principle

I do not have to make it happen. Get out of the way. The more I tried to make it happen, the less it would work.

Speak the Word. Live in the Kingdom. Let the results take care of itself. Get out of God's way. Let the kingdom work. Count on the life that is in the Word of the Kingdom of God. Stop trying to get people to do anything. Get out of the business of making things happen.

My effort is putting the sickle in. Looking for people who need help in a transition. I plant the seed and watch it grow. I water and watch. Have confidence in the power in the Word of the Kingdom. There is a Kingdom of God. We can seek and find it through Jesus Christ. I will speak about Jesus - the Unspeakable riches of Christ. Introduce the Kingdom of God so they will understand the Kingdom and be prepared to enter it. #3 @ Intro

Pastors and leaders have the primary responsibility enabling people to be together to flourish and grow in Christlikeness. They will develop spiritual competence. Do things we associate in what we do in being a Christian. Be able & competent in things like Praying. Helping people who need help. Enduring suffering joyously. Speaking the Gospel. #9 @ 4:00 (est.)