



*August 7, 2022*

*“A False Christianity – Part 1½”*

*SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.*

News:

Church **Camp** Aug 22-24

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We have a \_\_\_\_\_ impression of God.

We \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus with our personal fears... experiences... desires...  
agendas... and with our cultural and confirmation biases...

These, and others like them, are insidious influences on our perception of everything and they must be \_\_\_\_\_ before we can hope to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as He is, rather than as we want Him to be...

There is only one source of objective, reliable, evidence – the Holy \_\_\_\_\_.

That source material must be taken as a \_\_\_\_\_ inspired by the Holy Spirit in its entirety.

Ultimately, we are all our own god because we \_\_\_\_\_ in what we’ll believe, in whom we’ll trust. We are all driven by self-love which, due to the uncertainties and uncontrollability of the world, generates tremendous fear, which then leads to developing a personal \_\_\_\_\_ to give comfort.

For a person to believe in themselves and choose to extend that belief to Jesus, is no \_\_\_\_\_ than the person who did the same with any farcical belief.

Can you see that? If I choose – I’m \_\_\_\_\_ what constitutes Truth – I am god. All idolatry is self-idolatry

No person can be Saved by choosing Jesus. We are Saved by Jesus choosing us. (John 6:37, 44, 15:16). Whether \_\_\_\_\_ gets a touch, or only those who \_\_\_\_\_, is irrelevant for us. our purposes today.

The true Christian person is a Christian, not because they trusted in themselves so much that they reached out for the True Christ, it is only ever because they responded to the \_\_\_\_\_ to surrender their belief in self, in exchange for belief in Christ.

As Christians we constantly \_\_\_\_\_ who we are in Christ ~

We forget that we are no longer human beings, and that this is no longer our home (John 17:16).

Heaven is where His perfect Will is entirely unopposed.

Eternal Life begins the \_\_\_\_\_ of Salvation and continues forever even though there is a transition.

What we need to be the new creation we are in Christ is a perspective change (Romans 12:1&2).

Jesus wants us sojourning in a life that is no longer ours for a purpose.

This earthly life is no longer \_\_\_\_\_. We are here to do a spiritual job, not live a physical life. (I Corinthians 6:19&20, Ephesians 2:10, I Peter 1:16-19).

We will give an accounting (II Corinthians 5:10).

His resources and commission

The distraction, at a deeper level, is that we \_\_\_\_\_ the world to distract us.

There is no "Fear of the Lord," evident in our thinking, let alone in our behavior (II Corinthians 5:11, Acts 4:31, 9:31).

The amazing combination of the "Fear of the Lord" coupled with the "Comfort of the Holy Spirit."

How do we live this new life within the confines of our old life? Well, "What would Jesus do?"

We must know the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus before we can answer that question,

It is not "Deliver them from" pain, tribulation, or persecution, poverty, disease, or injury, heartache, disappointment, or difficulty. It is "Deliver them from Evil."

It is "Deliver them from "The Evil," as in the \_\_\_\_\_ of that which is opposed to the Father's perfect Will.



# Lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ  
ΘΕΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΥ ΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ  
ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ

Last week we had part 1, or a two-parter. It was my intention to present part two today and close out John chapter 5. The Holy Spirit evidently had other intentions. We'll plan for part two next week and see what happens. In part one we discussed what is probably the most important thing in Christianity. Exactly Who is Christ? In Whom do you trust for your Salvation? It's not nearly as simple a question as it might appear.

The premise is that every one of us has a skewed impression of God. It then follows that our understanding of the Father is tainted. In fact, I'll tell you that most people project their relationship with their earthly father onto their Heavenly Father.

Our understanding of the Holy Spirit is the most acknowledged weak point. Other than Pentecostals, who have a very lopsided view of the Holy Spirit, most Christians freely admit that they don't really grasp Who the Holy Spirit is.

The Christian view of Jesus is the one we probably feel the most certain about and that's the very problem. None of us know Jesus exactly as He truly is, and so

we get Him right to a degree. The single-most important variable in increasing that degree of accuracy is acknowledging the fact that we distort Jesus with our personal fears and experiences, with our desires and agendas, with our cultural and confirmation biases. They are insidious influences on our perception of everything and they must be admitted before we can hope to get Jesus as He is, rather than as we want Him to be. We humans are experts on deceiving ourselves particularly when trying to justify attitudes and desires. As Xenophanes said more than 25 centuries ago, “Men always make gods in their own image.”

Once our proclivities and preconceived ideas are accounted for and held at bay, we can then humbly, prayerfully examine the evidence without prejudice. What evidence? Please trust me when I tell you that there is only one source of reliable evidence – the Holy Bible.



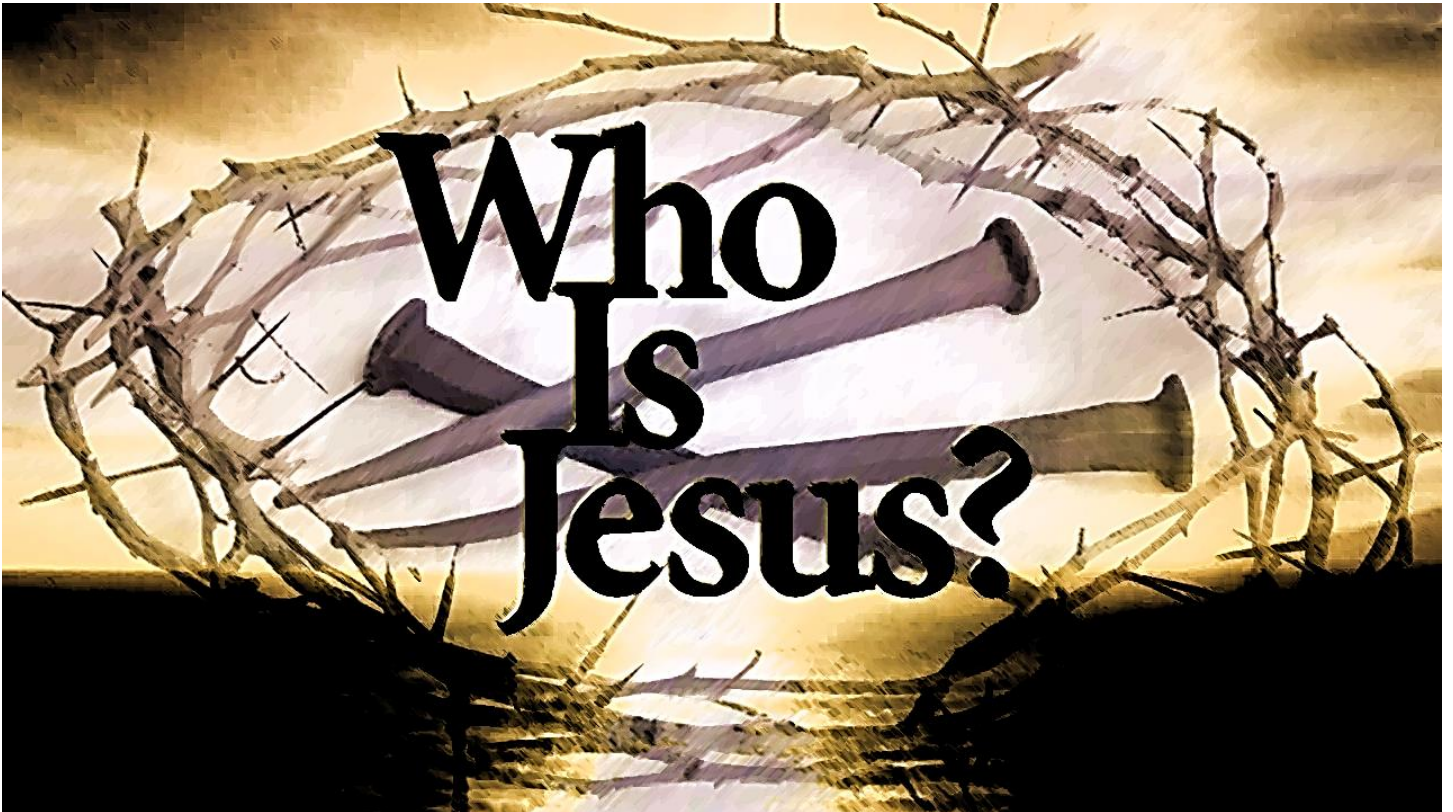


That source material must be taken respectfully, collectively, contextually, and evenly, as a single cohesive whole inspired by the Holy Spirit in its entirety.

I've known people who put more weight on what the Gospels say about Jesus than on what the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistles, or than what John wrote in the Book of Revelation – you cannot do that. The Bible, as we possess it today, is either entirely God's Word, or none of it is. If you are unclear why I'm saying this please see me later, I'd be happy to explain. God has either given to us a concrete objective witness

concerning Himself, or He hasn't. If He has, it can only be the Bible in its entirety.

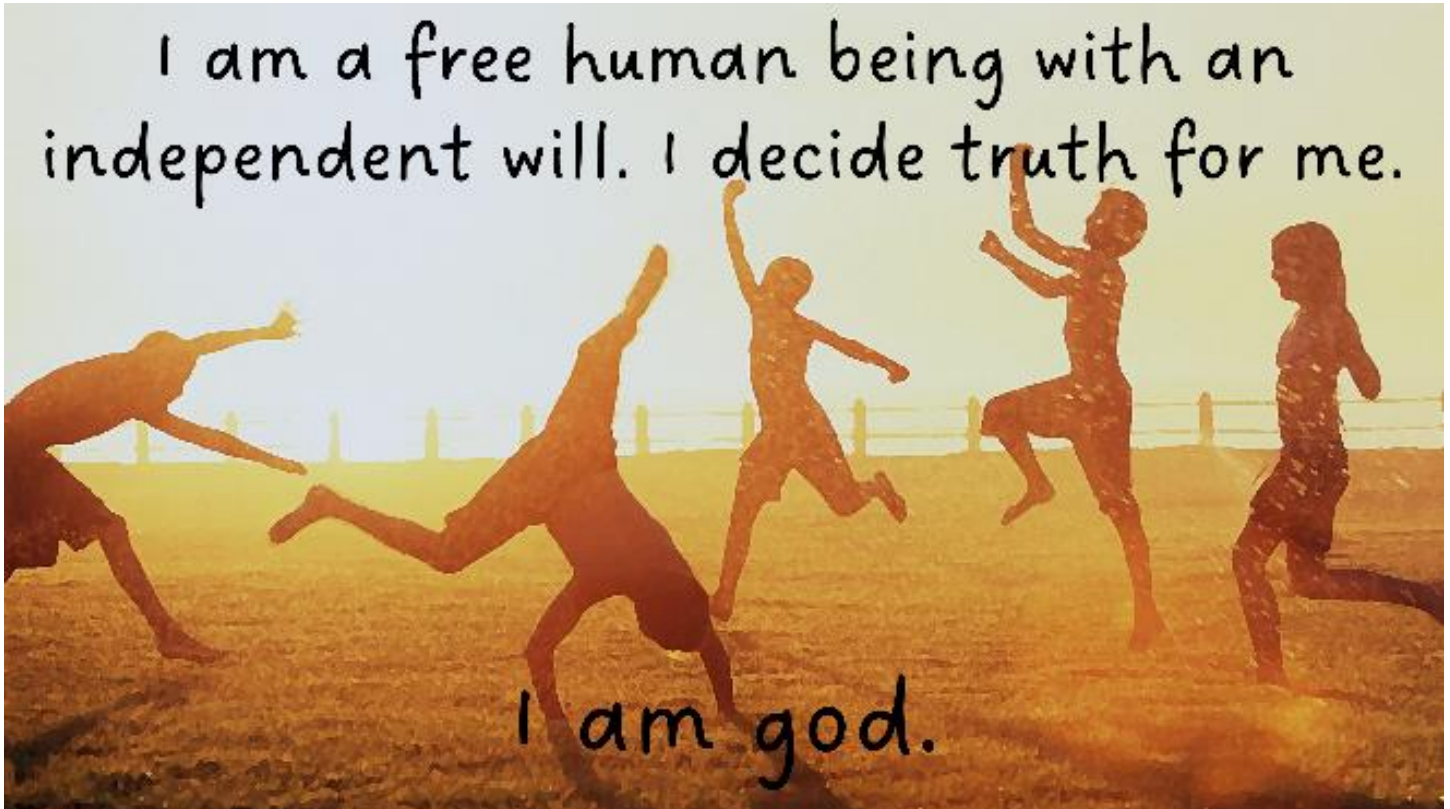
Chapter 5 of John's Gospel is likewise a single cohesive presentation, within that unified Bible, given to drive home this incredibly significant Truth. To be sure, it is the reason people refuse to be Saved, but more importantly for us who are Christians, it is also the reason we refuse to act like we're Saved.



Taken positively, it is the essential core of right Christian belief and action. Again, it can be simplified to a single question. In Whom do you believe? With the emphasis on the "Whom."



For every human being the answer is precisely the same – this is something that we all have in common around the globe and throughout time as our natural, native, default condition.



Every person believes in themselves. Ultimately, we are all our own god because we choose in what we'll believe, in whom we'll trust. We are the final arbiters of our faith and judges of our belief.

You might object by saying a child believes in their parents, or an ill person believes in their doctor, or a Christian believes in the Lord. Even a child, an ill

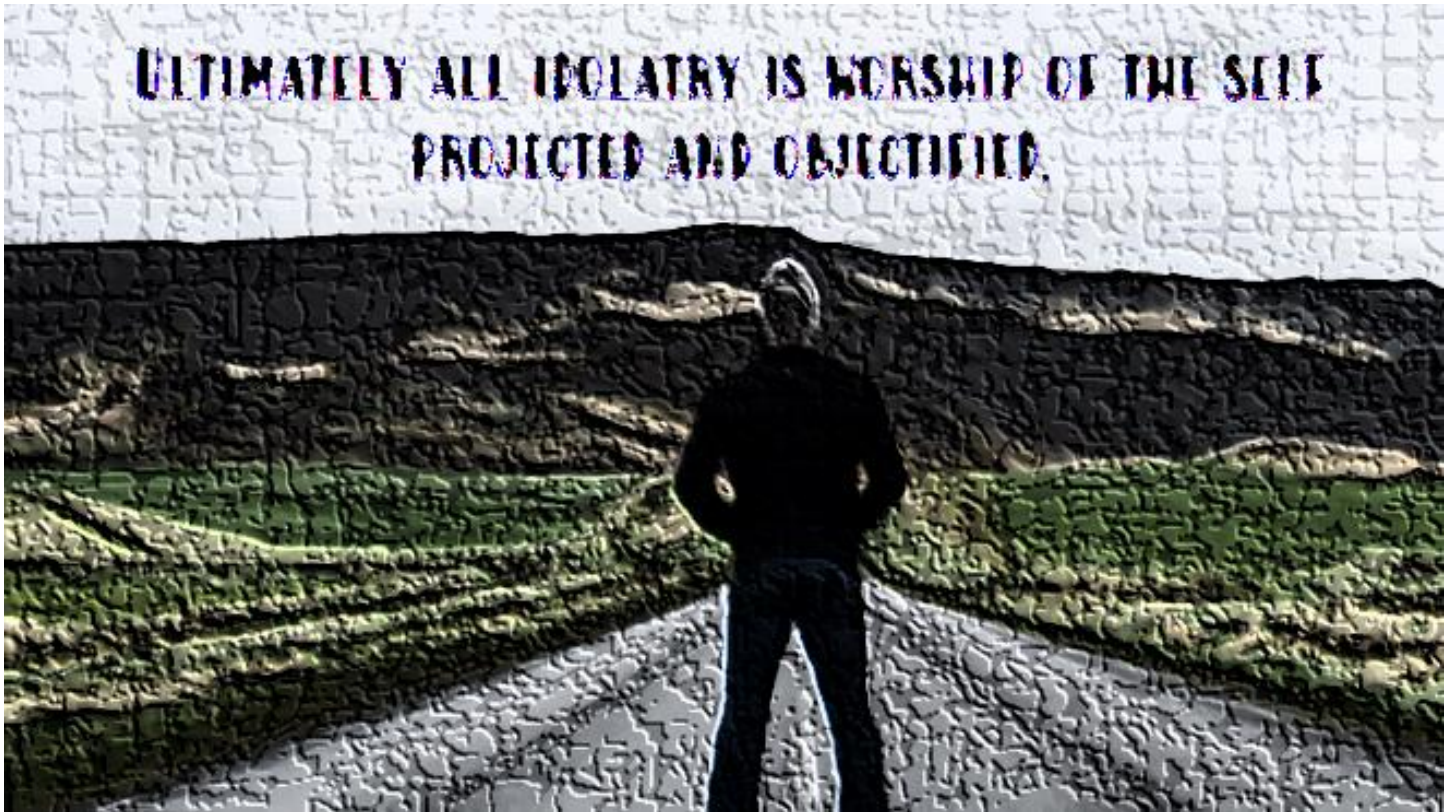


person, or a Christian, chooses to put their faith in what they believe will protect them. When we choose in whom or in what to believe, our true belief is in ourselves. That reality is what makes this both the thing that prevents Salvation and the thing that hinders proper belief, and proper living, in Christ.

If I believe in myself, I choose what else to believe, what to trust, what to obey, what to worship.

For the non-Christian it is not the One True God as He is – as He has revealed Himself to be. There is a refusal to accept the God of the Bible and replace Him with someone, or something else, that better resonates with such a person.

They believe in their personal ability to choose correctly for themselves. It is driven by self-love which, due to the uncertainties and uncontrollability of the world, generates tremendous fear. The fear is that life will not go the way such a person wants it to go. This leads to all manner of negative behaviors from manipulation of others to denial of reality and everything in-between.



It also leads to developing a personal Truth, a religion, a belief system. Most people are not imaginative enough to create something from scratch and so they co-opt ideas that work for them.

Whether it's some brand of Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism, Judaism, Taoism, Anarchism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Mormonism, Gnosticism, or any other "ism" that should be a "was-im," most people mix and match and add their own peculiar nuance to manufacture a unique religion all their own. By whatever name, it is a dead faith that prevents belief in the One True God and so leads to eternal death.

For the Christian, the thing that caused the transfer from death to life with the attendant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it never was a belief in self that caused a choice to believe in Jesus. This is important. For a person to believe in themselves and choose to extend that belief to Jesus, is no different than the person who did the same with Allah and his prophet Mohamed.

Can you see that? All who believe in themselves enough to choose their belief system are dead people creating dead religion that ultimately leads to staying dead forever, even if, now get this, even if that belief happens to be in Jesus. If I choose – I'm deciding what constitutes Truth – I am god. All idolatry is self-idolatry

No person can be Saved by choosing Jesus. We are Saved by Jesus choosing us.



Now, before you indignantly get on your Arminianist horse, let me explain. In the very next chapter Jesus said (John 6:37) “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” A few verses later in that same chapter, Jesus said, (John 6:44) “For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me.” A few more chapters later, Jesus said (John 15:16) “You didn’t choose me. I chose you.” That’s just a quick sampling in this single Bible Book called John.

Now, I’m not going to wear you out with Calvinism’s Sovereignty of God, versus Arminianism’s human free



will debate – I’m simply going to tell you that no one can come to the One True God apart from an impetus – an impulse – a touch – of the Holy Spirit. Whether everyone gets such a touch, or whether only those who respond positively get the touch, is irrelevant for our purposes today.

The point, my friends, is that the true Christian person is a Christian, not because they trusted in themselves so much that they reached out for the True Christ, it is only ever because they responded to the Holy Spirit to surrender their belief in self, in exchange for belief in Christ. I hope you can see the distinction.

It is the distinction between Christianity and religion. Christianity is a humble response to the Breath of Almighty God. Religion is a choice a person makes about where to extend their trust in self to something else. Now then, with all of that said, we can get to the salient point for those who are Christians.



As Christians we constantly forget who we are in Christ – constantly. Why, with the transfer from dark to light, from death to life, from sinner to saint. Why, after being reborn from above as a new creation in Christ, as people now indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Almighty God, as those redeemed, forgiven, justified, reconciled, adopted, sanctified children of the Heavenly Father... Why do we constantly forget who we are?

Everything in our experience and everything in our sensory perception militates against that reality. We are entirely submerged in a sea of pain, loss, confusion,

decay, destruction, and death, that drives us to distraction. We breathe in fear like we breathe in air.



Speaking of air, when I would get on the bus from the employee parking lot to the airport terminal to start a long trip, rubbing shoulders with tens of thousands of people for days on end. I would pray over and over, "Please Lord, don't let me forget who I am in You."

It is what you must do on your way to work each day. You see we are spiritual, yet we are still stuck in the physical. We keep losing our grip on that basic Truth, because of all the distractions of this material life.





# BORN FROM ABOVE

*John 3:1-7*

We forget that we are no longer human beings, and we forget that this is no longer our home. Jesus made it absolutely clear in John chapter 17 that Christians are “Not of the world, even as He Himself was not of the world” (John 17:16). When we say that a Christian has been “Born again from above” to use the terminology that Jesus used, and then we say that we are not of this world, again to use the Lord’s words, we mean that our new life in Christ is not a physical life anymore, but a spiritual life.





We've discussed it in many ways, using many concepts, many times before. Heaven is neither temporal, nor spatial - it isn't a place, nor is it a time; it is a state of being. The Kingdom of God exists where His perfect Will is entirely unopposed. His Kingdom exists in the Christian person forensically in the completed work of Christ, but also in physical reality, to the degree that person actively yields to the Holy Spirit.

Eternal Life begins the moment of Salvation and continues forever even though there is a transition spot between the perishable and imperishable to use the Apostle Paul's words.

What we need in order to be the new creation we actually are in Christ is a perspective change. We need to stop thinking, speaking, and acting, like the people who are of this world. We need to refuse to be distracted from the spiritual by the physical. We need a new way of looking at things – we need an altered method of reasoning – we need a renewing of our minds.



That's confirmed in Romans 12:1&2, 1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not

be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Since this is a study in John and not Romans, I will be brief. The Apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, is begging, on hands and knees, begging, that Christians would act the part. Grow up, be mature, exhibit some self-control, but most importantly, to recognize why the Lord has left you on planet earth, after transferring you into the Kingdom of Heaven. It's a legitimate question don't you think? I mean haven't you wondered why you're still here. Wondered why Christians are not simply taken into Heaven as soon as we are Saved out of this existence of sin, death, and the grave and Saved into a new existence of righteousness, life, and the Kingdom.



I will fear **no evil**,  
for **you** are with me

For that bit we go back to John 17 where Jesus, on the night before His brutal execution on our behalf prayed for us. He prayed, 14“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14&15). Those who have truly embraced Christ’s Word are no longer of this world and therefore the world hates us just as dark hates light and death hates life.

The part I’m focused on here is that Jesus could have prayed, “Father as each person becomes My disciple



take them home immediately – don't allow them to suffer one moment in the life that is no longer their life.” He didn't. Quite the contrary, Jesus prayed the opposite – “Don't take them out of the world.”

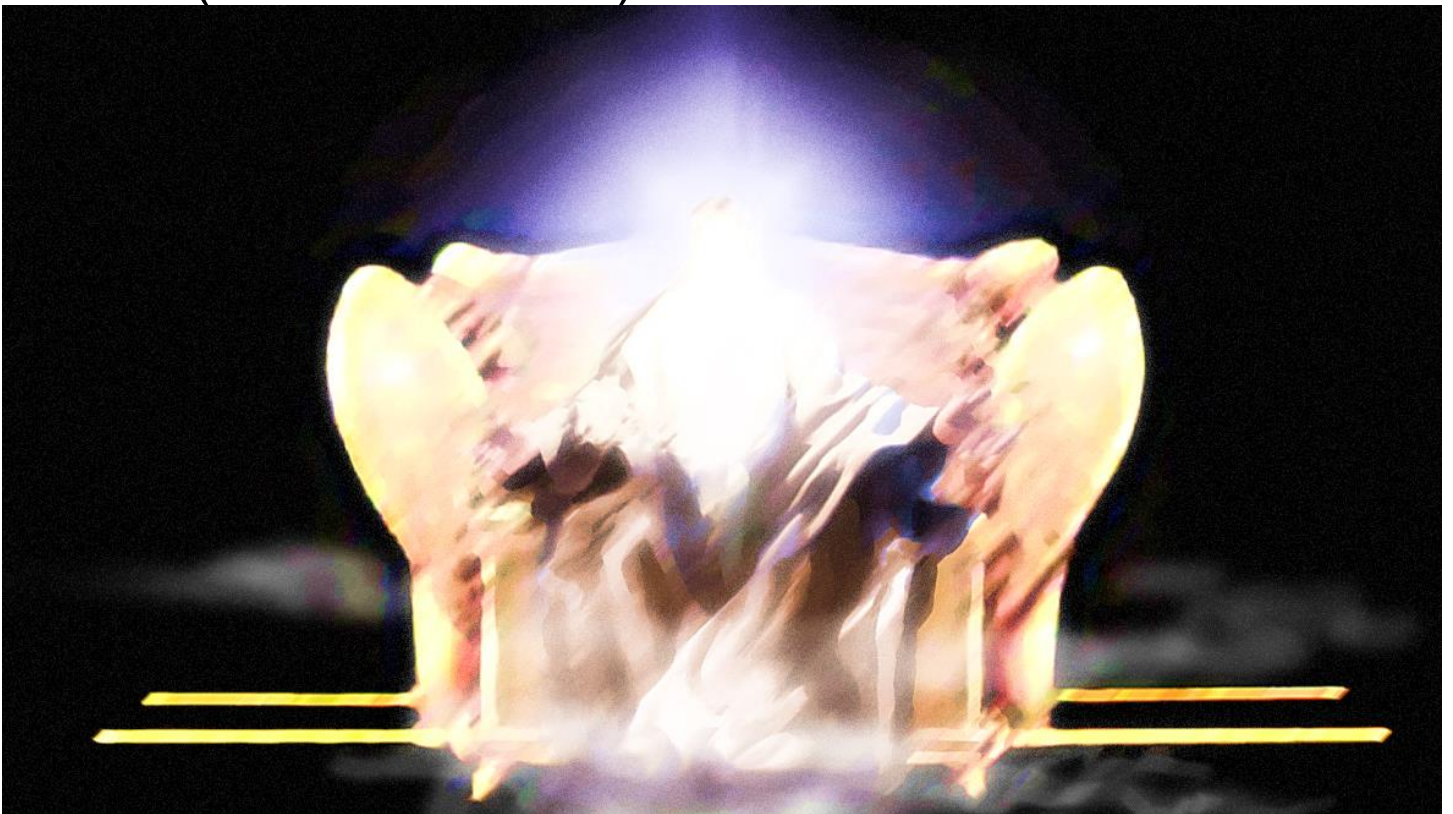
Jesus wants us sojourning in a life that is no longer ours for a purpose. Please get that. There is a divine reason that we are not immediately translated into the “Third Heaven” the moment we are Saved. Jesus, our Lord, and Master, wants us remaining in this physical reality that is no longer our home to be His hands and feet here – to be His ambassadors! How are we doing so far? Can you see how easily we are distracted into thinking that this current life is our own?



It's not; I Corinthians 6:19&20NLT, 19Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. You can change, physical body, to mean, your life here and now. Your life was abandoned when you embraced new life in Jesus. That's the idea behind Baptism. You voluntarily give up your present life and are buried under the water and when you rise up out of that watery grave you are a new creation in Him established for His purposes just as Ephesians 2:10 tells us, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

It couldn't be clearer as the Apostle Peter wrote in his first letter; Peter reminded us that God declared, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” Skipping down a bit... He explained, “You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:16-19).



We are here to do a spiritual job, not live a physical life. This is the demand of Christianity that most Christians

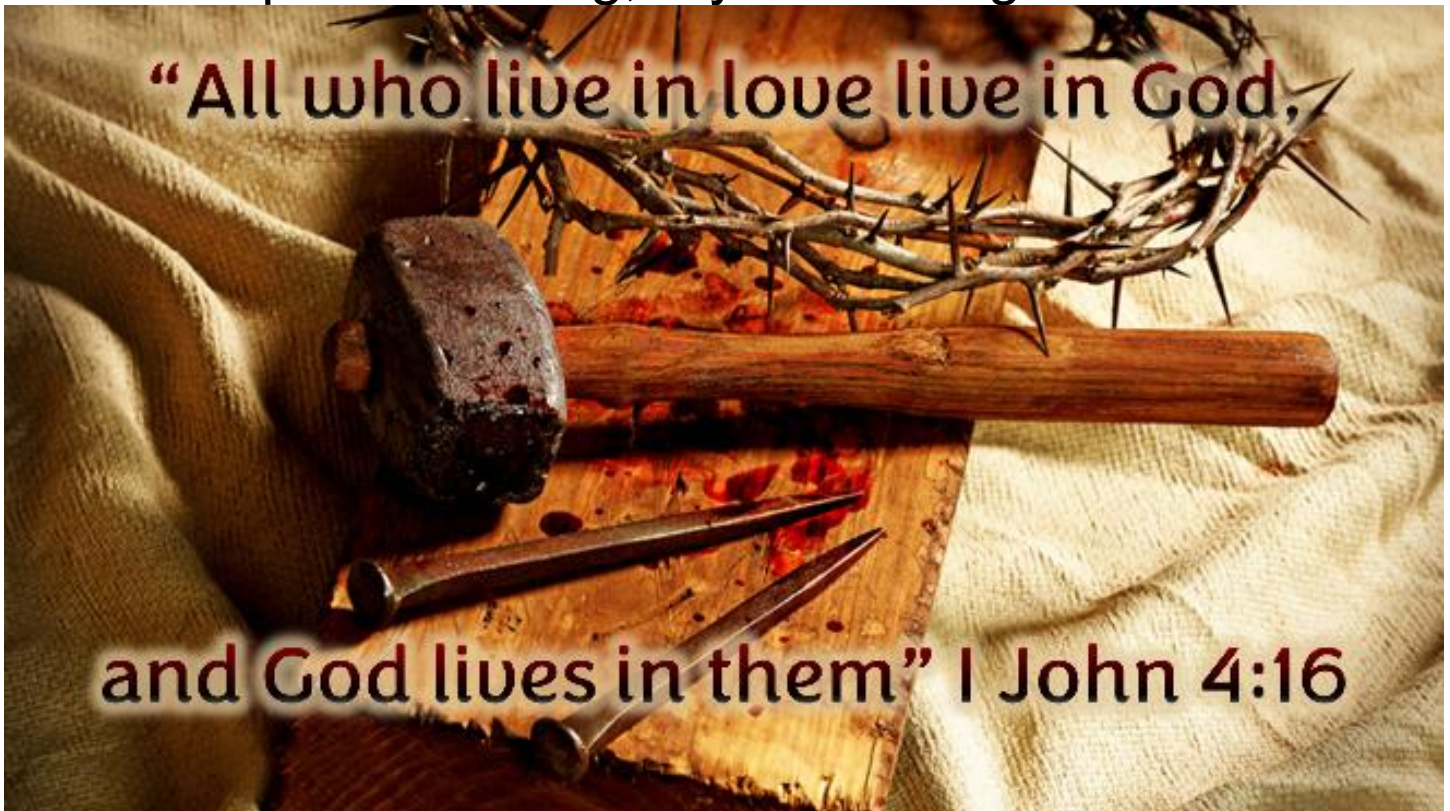
ignore. Some would say that they didn't know, but we all know deep down from the still small voice of the Holy Spirit within us. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Christians, he reminded them, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). Biblically, that is a settling of accounts between the Lord and you for what you did in this life with the resources and the commission that He gave you.



What resources? Well, we could start with the breath in your lungs and go from there. Nothing you have is



yours – it is an illusion that you possess anything. I promise you, everything you have can be taken away from you in an instant. Read the Book of Job, or read the book “Man’s search for meaning,” by Viktor Frankl, or “The rape of Nanking,” by Iris Chang.



What Commission? It is first and foremost Agapê. Agapê God enough to actually obey Him. Agapê the church enough to actually make it better and finally Agapê the lost enough to actually share Christ with them. The Great Commission is to spread the Gospel.

We talk, and we pray, and we sing... About how God will support us in our trials and tribulations. When times

are tough, and when we are abused, the Lord will give us strength – He will never forsake or abandon us. We make that about our everyday struggles in this life that are often due to our own selfish choices. The reason the early church needed to be reminded about the faithfulness of God in the midst of their trials was because they were being beheaded, burned at the stake, and fed to wild animals, simply for being Christians. How did the authorities know that they were Christians? They refused to shut up about it!

We have a new life, we have resources, we have a commission from Christ, and we have the knowledge that He will ask us to give an account. We all know that. What then prevents us from living the way that we should?

It is, of course, distraction. At a deeper level, we allow the world to distract us because we are uncomfortable being a spectacle for Christ and we have a deep-seated belief that there will be no significant punishment, and our reward will be good enough. In other words, we think that Jesus is a pushover.



We are like the kid in the grocery store that keeps pushing his mom, even though she keeps threatening more and more severe action, because he knows that she'll never follow through. If she does punish him, he reckons that it will be mild and ultimately worth it.

We emphasize God's Grace so much that we live our Christian life almost identically to how we would live our life as non-Christians. We might go to church a couple of times a month, might give a little in the offering, might pray more than our atheist neighbor, that's about it.





There is no “Fear of the Lord,” evident in our thinking, let alone in our behavior. “Well, Scott, you dummy, we evolved Christians are way beyond the “Fire and brimstone” stuff of the past.”

The Apostle Paul said it was his own comprehension and recognition of the “Fear of the Lord” that encouraged him to “Persuade men” and conduct himself as a representative of Jesus Christ through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of the Father even though it cost him everything (II Corinthians 5:11, Acts 4:31). Acts 9:31 tells us that at the very beginning of Christianity, “The church



throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria (the areas where Jesus actively ministered during His time on earth) the earliest church... enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.”

It is that amazing combination of the “Fear of the Lord” coupled with the “Comfort of the Holy Spirit.” The “Fear of the Lord” can be taken to mean respecting the Lord enough to take Him and His Commission seriously. The “Comfort of the Holy Spirit” can be taken to mean His encouragement when we fail and His support when we are persecuted... Both of those mean that we are actually doing ministry – actually obeying the call as Christ’s ambassadors... It’s not comfort for when we stubbornly refuse to follow.



How do we live this new life within the confines of our old life? WWJD? “What would Jesus do?” Cliché, sure. passé, probably. Overused, not really. How can I say that it isn’t overused? Because in order for it to be used, one must actually know what Jesus would do and for that they would have to know Jesus. The Real Jesus, not the manufactured Jesus we talked about last week.

The Jewish experts in the Law of Scripture. The Jewish leaders who had the Scriptures memorized. The Jewish scholars who searched the Scriptures constantly, day and night, throughout their entire life...

All these people wanted to murder the very One to Whom the Scriptures pointed.

We do the same today. So many people dedicate so much of their time and effort trying to understand Who Jesus is by searching the Scriptures and bizarrely come up with a Jesus so alien to the One True Jesus plainly therein described.

We must know the true Jesus before we have any chance at all of living the new life in Him that we've been granted.



Remember, Jesus didn't want the Father to remove us from our earthly situation, His prayer was that instead of taking us home, that we be delivered from "The Evil." Going back to the John chapter 17 passage it is the identical concept in the "Lord's Prayer." Having the team get ready is practice for you... Practice to ignore the distraction and stay focused.

First of all, it is not "Deliver them from" pain, tribulation, or persecution. It is not "Deliver them from" poverty, disease, or injury. It is not, "Deliver them from" heartache, disappointment, or difficulty. It is "Deliver them from Evil."

Second of all, it is not actually the "Evil One," as in Satan, nor is it simply "Evil," as in some generic nebulous force; it is "Deliver us from 'The Evil,'" as in the totality of that which is opposed to the Father's perfect Will. Deliver us from all evil, that which is spiritual and that which is physical, that which is personified and that which is general, that which is external and that which is internal. Especially, that which is internal.



In this crazy, fallen, and depraved world, deliver us from the evil as we encounter all manner of trials in actively obeying Your Commission to love.