

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

May 12, 2019

Happy Mother's Day

"Jesus' Solution"

HAPPY

Mother's
DAY

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King's Kid's & Communion for all who are Christians

NEWS

VBS June 17th to the 21st

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

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1) How well do you tolerate differences? Is your opinion a little idol you have enshrined on the altar of your heart?

2) What must a person do to be saved?

3) How did Jesus show His compassion?

The religious leaders dismissed Jesus as being an agent of Satan. Why?

Ever notice, when you're driving...

Remember the Holocaust...

Words matter and what matters more, is the underlying

_____ that generate them. Guard your tongue, by guarding your _____ (Matthew 12:34, 15:16-20, Luke 6:45).

“God is Agapê” (I John 4:8, 4:16). Agapê is, by its most intrinsic definition,
 _____. Jesus is committed to you, without _____.
 Our life experience is that acceptance is based upon _____.

Human love for another is only love for _____.

Your sin, your past and your present inability to be as good as you
 think you need to be, are not greater than the
 _____ of the Word on a cross.

I John 4:19

Only when we accept our acceptance, can we truly serve Him with the correct
 _____, and only then can we love others without a personal
 _____.

“How could God love me?” Is another way of saying...

This is the Gospel: Yield to the Holy Spirit by accepting the Gift as
 offered.

It is Jesus. He has done it all for you... You must humbly, gratefully accept His Gift,
 without trying to _____ it by your effort.

You go out to dinner with a friend...

MATTHEW 9:35-38 ~ ³⁵Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. ³⁶Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸“Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

Because of the Fall, the floodgates of sin were opened wide and the consequences of sin poured out, resulting in the _____ of every human person who has ever lived.

God is _____ moved by our plight.

Jesus looked at the people and “He felt compassion for them.” The word is σπλαγχνίζομαι (splānchē-nē-dzō-mī).

1) It is a deep emotional state that results in tangible action.

2) Biblically, it is a divine _____.

Our demeanor in difficulty proves our _____ in Him.

Revelation 21:4, then, I Peter 1:8, Hebrews 6:11, James 1:2-4

These were the Children of God, why were they so “_____”
_____.

What about us?

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

1) Jesus interacted with people...

2) Jesus taught [διδάσκω (dē-dās-kō)].

He called Himself “The Teacher” (Matthew 26:18, John 13:13&14) in the _____ sense. (Romans 10:13&14).

3) Hand-in-hand with teaching - Jesus preached [κηρύσσω (kā-rūs-sō)].

4) What was the content of His teaching and preaching? The _____.

5) Jesus healed physical maladies... (John 6:26&27).

6) Jesus felt compassion because the people were leaderless.

7) The solution to the problem is to “Pray that the Lord of the Harvest sends out workers.”

How does that fix the problem?

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 9f ~ 051219

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

We saw last week that reactions to Jesus were mixed.



The Religious leaders dismissed Him out-of-hand as being an agent of Satan. Why? It was because Jesus did not fit their expectations for a good Jewish man, let alone a Rabbi with a following, let alone a prophet with power and authority, let alone - Lord forbid - their own Messiah.

Jesus wasn't just like them. He constantly said and did things that disturbed their sensibilities - people don't like that.

I saw this the other day and thought it was an apt analogy. Ever notice, when you're driving, anyone

driving 10 mph slower than you, is an idiot, and anyone driving 10 mph faster than you is insane.

You drive the way you drive, not only because you think it's right, you generally think it's the only kind of right there is... Therefore, everyone driving differently than you, is wrong.

How much worse is it when we get to the subject of deeply held religious beliefs? In Christianity's past, we have had various groups of so-called pious Christians, literally, and yes, I mean literally, burn other so-called pious Christians, at the stake, simply for holding a slightly different doctrine.

Radically different ideas, whether in religion, politics, ethics, or driving, often lead to violence. So, really, it should come as no surprise that the Jewish establishment wanted to eliminate Jesus, whatever the cost, because to them, He was a radical destabilizing influence that could not be tolerated.

It usually starts slowly, almost imperceptibly. I saw an interview of a Jewish lady last night. She, and her family were sent to Auschwitz when she was 12. She was the sole Holocaust survivor from her family. Both

her parents and her sisters were among the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis.

Moms make sure your kids know. To forget the past is to repeat the past (Santayana paraphrase).

She said the mass genocide of her people started with words. It was the same for those opposed to Jesus. His crucifixion started with words. “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 9:34). And we go from there... Words matter and what matters more is the underlying attitudes that generate them. Guard your tongue, by guarding your heart (Matthew 12:34, 15:16-20, Luke 6:45).



As for the average Jew back then - well, they were mostly amazed by Jesus. They were more open to His radical ideas, methods and actions, because He gave them what they wanted. Jesus spoke with personal authority and then He backed it up with miraculous power.

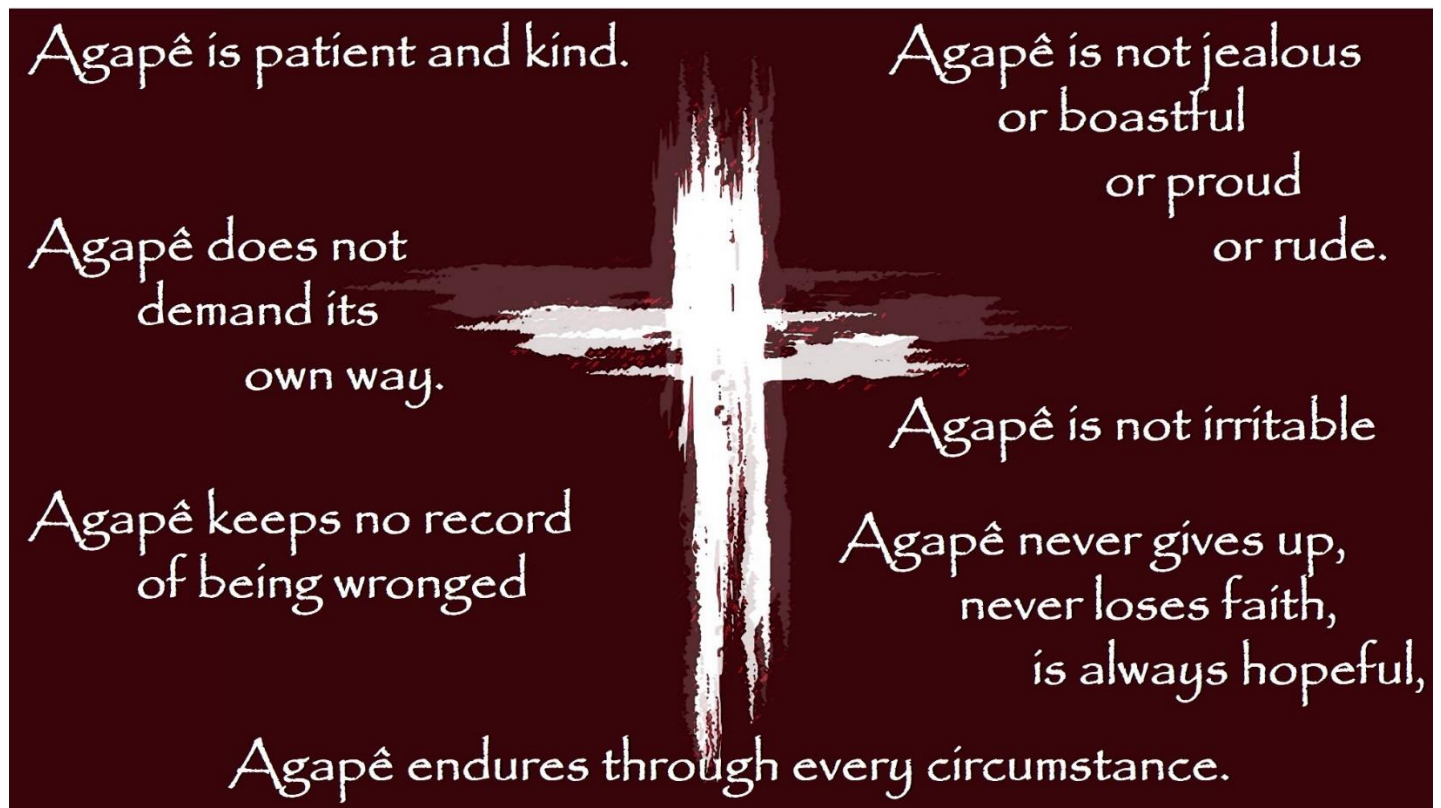
His beliefs, behavior and demands would eventually prove to be too different, too radical, in general, simply too much for most of them as well.

As I said last week, Jesus will tweak you if you get to know Him well enough, follow Him long enough, He will

eventually fail to meet your expectation, or ask you something well outside of your comfort zone.

What will you do then?

Will you love, honor, obey and fully accept Jesus for Who He truly is - no matter what... Or does your loyalty, devotion and commitment have conditions?



Since I brought that up, let me clearly say that “God is Agapê” (I John 4:8, 4:16). Agapê is, by its most intrinsic definition, unconditional. Jesus is committed to you, without conditions.

I know that gets your attention, makes you a little uneasy. It makes very little sense to us. I have to be good, or at least self-flagellating, for Jesus to look my way. I must do something to earn His love.

Most of us have a difficult time with it because we've never experienced such acceptance. Our life experience screams that acceptance is based upon performance.

We have it ingrained in our core being that we must measure up to some minimum acceptable standard. We receive that message loud and clear from every other human and we send that message back to them just as clearly.

People set boundaries. I love you with all my heart, until you get too crusty, and then I don't. Some couples even change their wedding vows from "Until death do us part," to better reflect our reality with "Until love dies."

We expect that from everyone and so we expect it from God. I know God loves me because the Bible tells me so - I know I'm supposed to believe that and so I'll pretend that I do, but deep inside, I know He doesn't.

How could He, I'm such a mess. I've done such terrible things. I continually fall short.

To bring it full circle, we then treat Jesus that way. I'll follow Him with complete abandon, until it gets too difficult or until I get too angry or too hurt or too disillusioned... I'll follow closely until Jesus, Christianity, the church, the pastor, other Christians, life fails to live up to my expectations, fails to meet my minimum acceptable standards.

Please recognize that human love for another is only love for our self. Performance based acceptance means I love you as long as I'm getting what I need from you. I love me, not you. Oh, my friends, praise be to God - He's so much better than us! Praise His Holy Name - that He doesn't love us with the same kind of self-serving human love we traffic in.

Your sin, your past, your inability to be as good as you think you need to be, your mess and your problems, whatever they may be, are not greater than the sacrifice of the Word of Almighty God nailed to a cross.

Get over yourself! To think otherwise is blasphemy. What makes you and your sin so special? Drive into Christ and pray for the Holy Spirit to pour out His Agapê love into your heart, so that you can love God no matter the circumstances, because you know that He loves you no matter the circumstances.

We love Him, because He first loved us (I John 4:19).

Only when we accept our acceptance, can we truly serve Him with the correct motive, and only then can we love others without a personal agenda.

I'll be brutally honest with you. One of the reasons we have such a hard time believing God loves us is because we take ourselves far too seriously. That's a nice way of saying we are so self-focused we think we are the center of the universe or at least very close to it.

"How could God love me?" Is another way of saying, I'm such a magnificent person and since I fail to live up to my magnificence, I disappoint myself, so clearly God must likewise be disappointed in me?

Look, the other day I was chatting about Quantum mechanics with my dog Lochlann. Many of you know Lochlann - he's a Border Collie - the rocket scientists of the dog world. Anyway, he was having a very hard time understanding wave-particle duality and quantum entanglement. As I tried to explain, he would quizzically rotate his head. Did I get impatient? Was I disappointed? Did I reject him and tell him he wasn't my dog anymore?

Compared to God, we're not even the fleas on a dog, let alone the dog. Get real. When you fall down, press into the Lord, be transparent with Him, confess, repent, get up and go again, fall down, rinse and repeat. But always keep moving forward riveted on Him.

Incidentally, the only thing worse than wallowing in your own inadequacy, is thinking that you're magnificent and simultaneously being deceived enough to believe you're living up to your perceived magnificence. It's called being pompously self-righteous. The Pharisees had it down pat. It leads to inquisitions and prevents personal repentance.

Since it's Mother's Day and since we went down this road, let me put a bow on it for you. This is the Gospel.

God the Father loved His human creatures so much He gave up, handed over, surrendered what was most precious to Him.

God the Word made flesh loved mankind so much He voluntarily went to the Cross and humbly stayed on it until He died.

God the Holy Spirit loves us so much He testifies to that Truth. He shows us that the way to eternal life in full communion with God and the saints, is through the Salvation thus provided.

What you and I must do, is yield to the Holy Spirit by accepting the Gift as offered.

We can bandy about a bunch of fancy religious words and concepts, but the Gospel is Jesus and Jesus Alone. "Salvation belongs to the Lord" and He has provided it through Christ's atoning death and proved it by Christ's Bodily Resurrection...Period. "It is finished."

Anything beyond that minimizes Jesus - it diminishes His sacrifice to the exact degree that we think our performance plays a role.

All the other stuff, theology, sound doctrine, Biblical education, water baptism, holy communion, confession, repentance, church attendance, worship practice... All of it comes as byproducts or elements of Salvation, not in order to earn Salvation.

It is Jesus. He has done it all for you... You must humbly, gratefully accept His Gift, without trying to minimize it by your effort. You go out to dinner with a friend. They surprise you by saying, "It's my treat." You then diminish their gift by saying, "I'll leave the tip," or "I'll buy next time." You have just partially negated their generosity. Just say, "Thank you so much, I really appreciate it; you are very kind."

Once we fully accept that our Salvation is God's generous, unmerited gift, then we're able to yield to the indwelling Holy Spirit and grow as a child of God for the correct reasons and right motivation.

We work diligently at trying to act like God's children because we are His children. It's what we do in our family - It's how we roll. I may not be very good at the family business as a small child, but I desire to get better at it, because I love my Father and I love my family and I want to conform to what I love.



Matthew 9:35-38 ~ 35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

We finish our two-chapter section with a general summary that then pivots, making a smooth transition into the next section.

Because of the Fall, the floodgates of sin were opened wide and the consequences of sin poured out covering every physical thing, resulting in the suffering of every human person who has ever lived.

We are well acquainted with the concept. Life is hard, at times it seems unbearable, and even when things are going great, we fear it will change quickly. We know that pain, hardship and tragedy are always lurking nearby. It is easy to succumb to the onslaught of real trouble and even easier to fall prey to fear - which is nothing more than the worry about some possible future pain that may or may not ever materialize.



What's interesting is that God is emotionally moved by our plight. He cares so deeply in fact, that He physically, spatially, temporally, demonstrated His Agapê for us by sacrificing Himself. Never minimize God's love or compassion - it enables His mercy.

Jesus looked at the people and "He felt compassion for them." It is an interesting concept. The word is σπλαγχνίζομαι (splänch-nē-dzō-mī). It is a verb used in the New Testament in one of only two ways. First, it is used by Jesus in His parables describing the love and compassion driven mercy of the character representing God. Second, it is used to describe Jesus' reaction to the bedraggled, confused and needy people.

Two things are worth noting. First, it is a deep emotional state that results in tangible action. The Prodigal's father "Felt compassion and fully embraced his son." Jesus "Felt compassion and acted."

Second, as presented in the Bible, it is a divine mercy. God looks at us and is emotionally moved to the point that He does something about it. Because that is true, using this word to describe Jesus' feelings, lets the savvy person know that there is a link between Jesus and God. It is a subtle way to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is God with us.

Jesus was emotionally moved to divinely act for the good of the many.

Nothing has changed, except now, "It is finished." Now, no one needs to live in hopelessness - no one needs to live that way. So many choose to cling to hopelessness, but it is unnecessary.

Jesus is the answer to all of life's problems for all people, in all places, at all times, because He is Life. He has defeated sin, and so death, and so suffering.

In Him, there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow, because the present world order will pass away completely (Revelation 21:4). People who get that, have so much hope that it creates in them an unspeakable and supernatural joy no matter what the circumstances (I Peter 1:8, Hebrews 6:11, James 1:2-4).

Our demeanor in difficulty proves our trust in Him.

That steadfast trust in Jesus, as we go through great tribulation, is a light of hope shining in the darkness that testifies to His compassionate comfort towards us.

That's what Jesus wanted to give the people... A sure and certain hope.

All these Jewish people, these descendants of Jacob, these Children of God, should have been the most joyful people on the planet, instead, they desperately needed help, compassion, a touch from Heaven, they desperately needed a Savior.

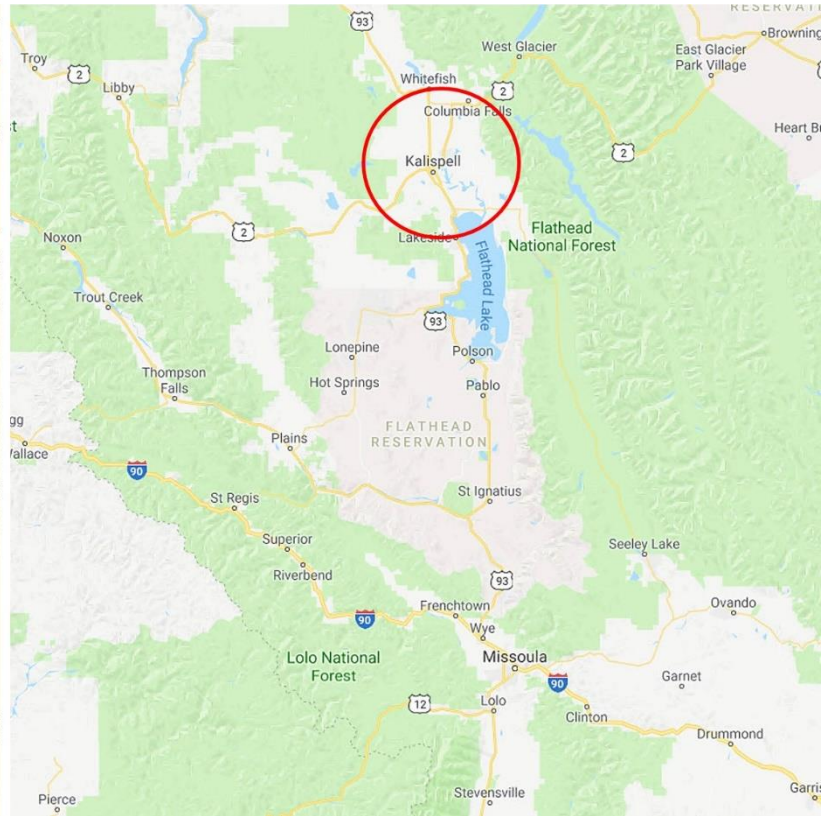
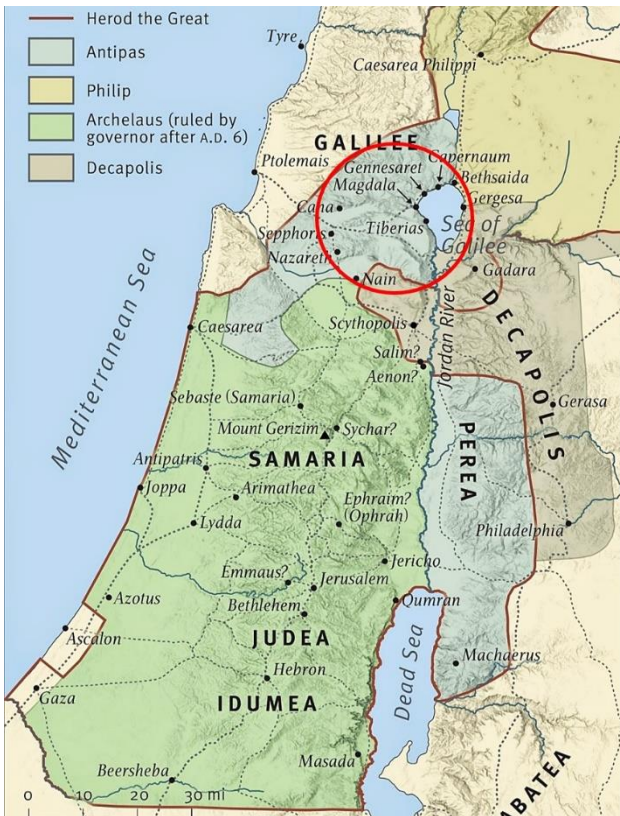
Why? These were the people who possessed God's Holy Word and lived in His Promised Land. They were the direct blood-descendants of Father Abraham. They

had Moses and Elijah. They had David and Hezekiah. They had Jerusalem and the Temple. Why were they so miserable, so “Distressed and dispirited”? Why?

As a momentary side-note, do you notice any correlation to Christianity today? In other words, do you see Christians living an overabundantly joyful life of unshakable hope, or do you see Christians who are as “Distressed and dispirited” as everyone else?

If Christians aren’t living the victorious life here and now, one would reasonably ask why. Taking it back to the text, why weren’t the Jewish people the most positive, hopeful joyous people on earth?

To find out why, we look to the way Jesus handled it. What was His solution. What did He do?



1) Jesus interacted with people. Jesus traveled throughout northeastern Galilee and across the Sea, by the same name, into the Hellenistic provinces of the Decapolis and probably Gaulanitis to the northwest.

He traveled through the rural countryside, through small hamlets and villages, through larger towns and well-developed cities, meeting all kinds of people with all kinds of personal issues where they were at - physically and spiritually.

Every community had a synagogue. It might have been a very small and plain structure serving a surrounding area of rural folks. It might have been a rather nice

building at the heart of a town. It might have been an ornate edifice in a city center that could accommodate a large crowd.



Whatever the particulars, one thing was constant. The local synagogue was at the heart of both the religious

and social life of the people. Not only was it a place where one would expect Biblical discussion - it was the place where one would easily gather a group for any purpose.

It was like their home church, town hall, community center and area courthouse, all rolled into one. Synagogues were perfect places for Jesus to interact with the people.



2) Jesus taught. He used whatever classroom was available, from a grassy slope overlooking the water, to a boat on the water, and from the dusty trails, to private homes, but most noteworthy, Jesus taught in those

ubiquitous synagogues. To teach is the verb διδάσκω (dē-däs-kō). Didache is the noun form meaning the “teaching.”

This word-family occurs well over 200 times in the New Testament. Teaching is huge in Christianity. It is what Jesus did and it is what He commanded His disciples to carry on. The Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4, said that the Bible exists to teach us, and, in several places, he taught that it is sound teaching that keeps us from error. Biblical teaching is what prevents heresy, and the inevitable blasphemy, that follows.

Now, it is said, that if you torture the Bible enough, it will confess to anything. Practically every bad doctrine comes from wrongly interpreting the same Bible.

What are we to do? Every Christian must continually accept help to correctly discern the difference.

Ultimately, it is help from God the Holy Spirit, but He aids us in our understanding through human teachers.

It is impossible to properly understand Scripture apart from Godly teachers. It is His design, not mine.

That's not a popular sentiment in America, particularly in Montana. We are so individualistic and have such an overinflated opinion of ourselves, we mostly think we can figure out the Bible on our own. Most Christians on this continent think they know as well as, or better than, people who have dedicated their lives the pursuit.

I had a whole huge section on this topic, but because it's Mother's Day I'll spare you, just know that this postmodern disdain for professionals who really do know more than you in their given field of study is unbiblical and unreasonable.

Unless you are a professional auto mechanic, find one you trust and trust her. Unless you are a medical doctor, find one you trust and trust him. Unless you are a professional pilot, find one you trust and trust her. Unless you are a professional Bible teacher, find one you trust and trust him.

I'm not saying blindly follow, but I am saying you must have a teacher. A teacher, who by the way, will always be an imperfect human being.

Jesus taught, in fact, Jesus called Himself, "The Teacher" (Matthew 26:18, John 13:13&14) in the

absolute sense. He is the source of all correct information, all Truth, specifically, that which is conveyed to a recipient in a comprehensible way. Jesus taught, because without knowledge there can be no change. As the Bible says, 13NLT“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? (Romans 10:13&14).

Teaching is “Telling them,” it is imparting information to another, in a way they can understand, accept and integrate, it so that it becomes for them knowledge. Knowledge correctly applied is wisdom.



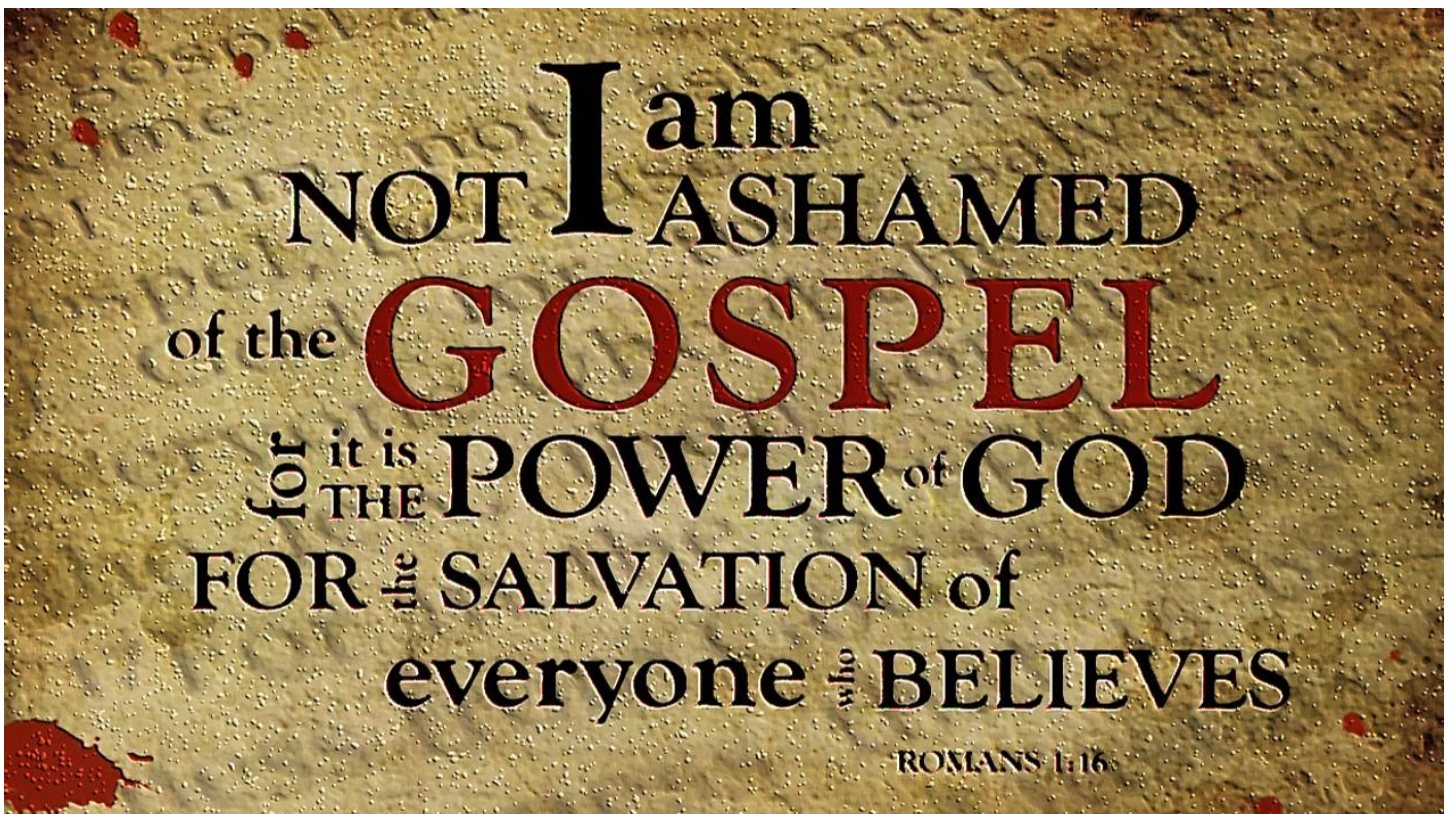
3) Biblically, teaching goes hand-in-hand with preaching. That's the third thing, Jesus preached. It is κηρύσσω (kā-rūs-sō). From the noun form, we get the highfalutin ecclesiastical term kerygma, which is the content of the Good News - the content of the information or teaching.

Preaching is really a combination of proclamation and exhortation - announcement and pronouncement - declaration and inspiration.

Preaching is presenting the teaching, or Truth, motivationally. It is to exhort, encourage, cajole, urge, inspire people to take the teaching and put it into

practice. Good preaching always has, at its core, good teaching. And really, good teaching always encourages the exercise of the teaching, which is preaching.

As I said, the two go hand-in-hand. The content determines the value and so, Jesus was first and foremost, “The Teacher.” Secondly, He was the Preacher. The One, pushing the listeners to become doers.



4) What was the content of His teaching and preaching? It was the Gospel or Good News concerning the Kingdom, as in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Remember, that the Kingdom Jesus offered was an either/or, all or nothing, present and eternal reality.

The content then was essentially the things He proclaimed in His Sermon on the Mount that we studied so extensively.



5) Jesus healed physical maladies. It was necessary as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. It was necessary as a validation of the Message He was teaching and preaching. It was a faith builder to the people, and it was a tangible display of His divine compassion.

Jesus still heals today. Since that is true, we wonder why He doesn't heal everyone, or at least why He doesn't heal more often. First, everyone is perfectly healed. No one enters the afterlife with any physical imperfections. Second, most of the people living in Galilee during Jesus' ministry were not healed.

The ones who were, no doubt had an experience similar to this... I'm blind, Jesus gave me sight, praise God! Three days later, I still have tremendous back problems. I wish Jesus would have healed that too. Three years later, I can't believe that after Jesus Himself healed me, I now have heart disease. See what I mean?

Jesus fed the 5,000 and then moved on. Those people tracked Him down and when they found Him Jesus said, 26NLT "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs" (John 6:26).

Jesus healed, and Jesus still heals, but healing is only a sign to highlight the far greater healing of one's soul. Jesus went on to tell the crowd, 27NLT "Don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend

your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you” (John 6:27).



6) Jesus was emotionally moved to His Divine Compassion, because the people were leaderless. All they got from the people who were supposed to lead them was greater confusion.

Here I am. Send me.

Isaiah 6:8



7) The solution to the problem of the Jews not living with the joy of the Lord - with Christians today not living any differently than non-Christians around them?

Pray that the Lord of the Harvest sends out workers.

We're transitioning now into the next section and we'll talk a lot about what all this means and who the workers are as we go forward, but for now, know that the key to you living the victorious life for Christ is getting busy as a harvest worker.

Just like a good mom - juggling a million things and worried about a million more - but while you're focused

on your kid, actively parenting them at least for that time, you forget your problems.

It's the same in Christianity. While you're focused on Jesus and doing the best you can ministering to other people - at least while you're engaged - you aren't worried about you.