

"For Such A Time As This - Streams in the Desert"

Baylor University, February 2004 - 3 Sessions

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Scribe's Comments - The sessions were transcribed from the audio in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** & [brackets] are added section headers and key point emphasis.

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Session I - Wells of Living Water

[RT: 1:02:48]

[\[End of Introductory Comments @ :04:30\]](#)

● **Introduction** - *"Take care of yourself and your teaching"*

I'm here to talk to Church staff - the ones who carry the burden in small and large churches across the land. I think what I have to say is something I need to hear and perhaps you also will benefit from it.

Retreat Topic - *"For such a time as this - Streams in the Desert and Wells of Living Water - Christ's Congregations as Fountains of Light & Life"*

[5:30] - There isn't anything on earth that can take the place of what comes through the people of Christ. What they have to give, first of all what they have to receive, is God's gift to human beings. It is so important that we understand that. There isn't some other institution or movement that is going to take the place of what we do in our local congregations to bring Jesus Christ and the reality of His kingdom to ordinary people to prepare them to live in the Kingdom here and hereafter.

We want to think high enough of that calling. All the other manifestations of Christian organizations in history are designed to serve those people who carry Christ in their lives in the congregations of His people across the earth. All of the difficulties we face as human beings can only be solved in as much as that work is effectively done. It is not easy. It is something we have to make a point of knowing how to do and paying special attention to successfully bring the reality of Christ into the world.

Paul's reminder to Timothy of the importance of taking care of himself.

I Timothy 4:16

[7:05]

"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

Paul had a tremendously high view of the work of ministering Christ to people. He found himself in a position as one who had persecuted Christ and yet in spite of that Christ had claimed him and not only claimed him but sent him out into the world.

Ephesians 3:7-8 - *"I've been made a minister of Christ according to gift of God's grace that was given to me according to the working of His power."*

- There was a life that was given to him that was something beyond him.

"To me the least of all saints that this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

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That phrase, "the unsearchable riches of Christ" is what we have given to us and what we are privileged to bring to others. The world is a hungry place. The needs of the human soul are very great. The language that is used in scripture is vivid and we must understand what it means.

• The Theme of Living Water

[9:00]

Emerges in the OT and especially John 4 & 7. Try to give a very clear sense of having living water given to us that provides a fountain of life springing up forever and then a river of life flowing out from us. When we stand in our local congregations, our families and our communities that's really the work to receive the living water and let it flow through us. It isn't to follow our own cleverness or to work in whatever strength we may be able to get up. It is to live in the richness of the Kingdom as a reality that flows through us.

I would have been out of the business of speaking for Christ 40 years ago if I had not realized and learned by experience the power of the Word of the Kingdom of God.

As Jesus so beautifully taught in His parables about how the power works

* Parable - Farmer Sowing the Seed. Farmer does not know how it happened. (Mark 4:26-28)

* "I had no idea how [my books] happened. I never set out to write a book like that. Never asked a publisher to publish. They asked me."

* At Baylor as a young preacher boy, the Lord said to me, "Never try to find a place to speak. Try to have something to say." He taught me that I could concentrate on that and live with Him and count on Him to have the effect. I think that's the source of relief and rest and power in our work, congregations and communities. All the places we go as Christ's people is to just let that Living Water flow. Concentrate on taking it in. Make sure we do that. I think that's what Paul had in mind speaking to Timothy, "*Take heed to yourself*" or "*Pay close attention to yourself.*" Make sure that you're taking in the reality of this Living Water.

Psalm 46 - *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Though the earth shall fall away, the mountains should be thrown into the sea...we shall not be afraid. There is a river the streams thereof make glad the city of God."*

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The river is God Himself. God is in her and He will help her. It is the presence of God that gives us the life of the river. He is the river.

Isaiah 43:20 - *"The beasts of the field will glorify me. I have given rivers in the desert to give drink to my chosen people. I will pour water on the thirsty land...pour out my Spirit on your offspring and your descendants."*

John 4 - *"Anyone who drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst again."*

"Never thirst again" literally meaning - people who are driven by unsatisfied desire. Like this woman trying to find a way of obtaining by her own devices the things that would sustain her. Jesus talks about a different kind of water. She's interested in this water but she doesn't understand what this is "that I don't have to come out and draw water any more." Like Nicodemus when Jesus starts talking on a spiritual level, he doesn't quite get it. And this woman didn't get it.

He leads her step by step into understanding. God is here to sustain us. It is a spiritual matter. God is Spirit. Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. That's the level of the water He is talking about is spirit.

Think of spirit as "un-bodily personal power" - that's God. None of that - "the force be with you." It's a person. "God is in the midst of her." (Ps. 46)
Spiritual reality is God. That's life.

Jesus is teaching - "God is enough."

[16:20]

If you receive Him into your life, you will never again be governed by unsatisfied desire. Those who receive the Word of Jesus and the person of Jesus will never thirst again.

* Modern Philosopher Spinoza (1632-1677)

[17:10]

One of his projects was to find a good that was self-sufficient that if you had it, you didn't need anything else. Like Aristotle - the good was final that if you had it you didn't need anything else.

The complete sufficiency of God is a fundamental teaching of the Old & New Testament. The availability to God in Christ is the answer to the all of the needs of the human being. That's why the gospel presents Christ and His kingdom and invites everyone to come to Him and thru Him into the kingdom and receive the fullness of life which Jesus talks about.

If you think of what Jesus talks about, you think Jesus must be crazy.

"Don't worry. Look at the birds. How many birds are you worth?"

"Look at the flowers."

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What's He thinking about? All of that is said with this understanding,
"God is absolutely sufficient. God is enough. If you have God, everything else takes care of itself."

That's where we have to stand as we do our ministry and carry out our work and deal with the difficulties that come day by day. If we understand that, we will know God is the only and sufficient foundation of joy. Once you know there is God, that's enough.

"The Lord being my portion." The Lord is what I have. If we have that fixed in our mind, we have an unceasing fountain of joy. We bring that in the form of Christ. We learn not only that God is, we learn what God is like. We learn of His extreme goodness.

* Like **Job** at the end of the book who doesn't ask one of the questions he wanted to ask God. He said, "I've heard about you but now I really know you." Silence is the only appropriate response.

Think about that. It takes some getting used to. The idea that if I have God, nothing else matters. I can be joyful no matter what happens to me if I have God.

- * Paul in Jail - "I've learned no matter what circumstances, I can be content" because of the sufficiency of God.
- * Daniel in the Lion's Den was "The Lions in Daniel's Den"
- * Three Men in the Furnace

Sometimes it doesn't work out well from the human point of view. The point is no matter how it works out from the human point of view - all is well.

That's why Jesus teaches the way He does and gives us the beautiful statements in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere.

When Paul comes to say **"the unsearchable riches of Christ"** he is talking about the complete sufficiency of God to the individual and their loved ones and family and groups. That's how we are led in triumph in Christ because that is where we are living.

• The Problem We Face

[23:00]

If we're going to teach that, the problem that we have is that's not what you hear in our world. The teaching institutions don't bring this message. If we are going to successfully stand in our congregations and our communities and bring the reality of this God and His kingdom, we have to understand where the battle lies.

• Four Main Questions We Ask

[25:00]

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[See "Four Great Questions" file; "Genius of Jesus" @ 11:35]

I. What is the nature of reality?

Sounds so abstract, so philosophical. But it's always the basic question. Always the issue with idolatry. Who is supreme? What is ultimate?

The primary message we have to confront today is the physical universe is ultimate reality. Spiritual reality is not often thought of as a subject of knowledge and genuine interaction but rather, something off to the side. There is a long sustained effort to place it there.

* John Dewey, *The Common Faith* - Spiritual reality is merely a quality of physical or social reality, not itself an ultimate principle itself.

* *Humanist Manifesto* - Redefine spirituality in a way that is a mere function of human life, not something ultimate in itself.

Psalm 46 is not talking about that. Psalm 46 is talking about spiritual reality as if it were an ultimate and irreducible reality from which everything else came.

The problem is in all of our areas of professional and academic competence, spiritual reality does not play a part. A PhD in any area I think in any school in the country, you'll find God has nothing to do with the subject matter. That's a point we have to address because as leaders in our congregations, we have a different story to tell.

The most important thing I have to say to you this evening - **We have to understand this is an issue of what counts as knowledge. We have to assert the teachings of Jesus as knowledge of reality.** That's one of the hardest things to do today.

Reality is what you're going to have to deal with. I will say to my students reality is what you run into when you're wrong. It's quite unyielding. The bitterness of truth is that it doesn't care what you think or want. Reality is the same way.

As we bring the Word of Christ and that teaching tradition of a God who is overall, we have to be sure that we present that as a body of knowledge, not as mere tradition, or mere faith in some sense short of knowledge.

I am going slow because this is tough.

Knowledge (def.) "You have knowledge of something if you are able to present it as it is on an appropriate basis of thought and experience."

Knowledge includes the Bible & Christian tradition. There are a lot of things in the Christian tradition that is not knowledge. But there is a solid

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core of the creedal tradition of the Christian Church that constitutes a body of knowledge.

I think it is the single most important thing that we have to do in taking care of ourselves and watching our teaching. We understand and present the reality of God, the Trinitarian reality - God in Himself, a wonderful loving community creating a world and me in that world.

"A very present help in time of all trouble" (Psalm 46) I don't just mean I turn to Him not just in times of trouble but I turn to Him at all times. He is the primary atmosphere in which I live. That's crucial for us in our churches.

My experience - the primary battle - inability to believe in the reality of God.

We have placed so much emphasis on "profession" in our religion often for cultural and historical reasons that we often can not distinguish between professing something and actually believing it. We need to bring people to a place where they really do believe in God, really do believe that Jesus made clear what God is and made Him accessible, "*Through Him who believe in God.*" **I Peter 1:21**

~ II. *Who is well off?*

A function of the nature of reality. This is what people pursue:

- Does our well being reside in good reputation, money, good health?

Jesus talked about this (Luke 6): "*Woe be to you that are rich.*"

Not because there is something sinful about being rich. If you put your confidence in that, you're headed for trouble.

Blessed are the poor." Not because there is something glorious about being poor. It's not a good condition. The blessing is not in the condition but in the Kingdom.

Q - What is the Kingdom? God in action.

What is well being that we bring to ourselves and others?

It is living in the action of God.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?"

What are you seeking? You're not seeking the millennium or some political arrangement. You're seeking to be involved in what God is doing. God's kingdom is what God is doing. It's going to be around forever. **We are invited to count on that reality and base our life on it and become involved in it.** Whatever situation we are facing in life day by day or over the long run, **our well being is a matter of being alive in the Kingdom**

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of God and learning to act on it. Jesus said if you do that, everything else will be added to it.

Joshua 1:8 - That's talking about finding the Kingdom of God. God's law is God's ways.

How do you seek it? How would you know if you found it?

Most people in our religious culture think, "I'm trying to get to heaven when I die." It's not about heaven when you die. That'll take care of itself?

It's about knowing life now in the reality of God.

~ *III. Who is a really good person?*

Who is good and who is not has many claims and is often very political.

Jesus says a really good person is one who is pervaded by agape love - body, soul, spirit, character, all organized around agape love.

Agape Love is the intention to do the things that are good for the people that are loved. Love is the intention for good.

* I love chocolate cake - I don't intend the good for it. I want to eat it.

We dwell in it, we learn it. That kind of love comes from being loved. We love Him because He first loved us. That goes all the way back up to the top. **The ultimate reality is at the center of the universe is a God of love not just that He loves me but He is love.**

~ *IV. How do I become a really good person?*

Answer - Being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Learning from Him how to live in the Kingdom of God from the abundant resources of His Kingdom and His nature and that releases you from all of the burdens of running your own kingdom. [37:25]

That's where our trouble comes from - running our own kingdom. We have to lay it down or we have all these other problems.

Psalm 46 - *"God is our present strength, a very present help in time of trouble."*

* Sunday School answer - "What is a lie?" An abomination to God...and a very present help in time of trouble.

* Children Lying - Children learn young. They know it is managing to stay alive. We grow up and still have the same project. When we come to Jesus He has to help us change those habits.

"Don't lie one to another seeing you have laid aside the old person with his deeds." (Colossians 3)

We learn that by accepting Christ and His teaching into our lives in such a way that we know it is now safe to tell the truth.

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The greatest relief being a follower of Christ is the burden that goes off once you concede it is safe to do what is right.

I was raised to believe I had to lead a life with a large part hidden. That's what we learn when we step into Jesus' teachings and begin to see that this is real. Then we can move into our local congregations and speak truth to one another. We can live on a basis of truth. We don't need to mislead people.

* A little child is naturally open but very quickly learns it has to hide and develops all the techniques of hiding and perhaps by age 30 they have to hire someone for \$250 an hour to find them because they have so much duplicity and deceit worked into them. It spills over into our organizations, our **families**, often into our churches. A huge burden falls on us to manage all of that.

A great part Jesus is talking about when He teaches,

"Come unto me all you who are heavy burdened...",
you can step out from under all of that. You don't have to manage the truth. You don't have to make things come out. You can leave that to God. The battle is the Lord's. You get to stand in the truth watch it happen. In the middle of that you can love the people who hate you, you can bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you. What an incredible blessing to learn what Jesus has to teach us.

• Summary of the Four Questions

[42:15]

All of the great teachers of life have to address this. These are unavoidable questions.

* When I get up in the morning, I have to decide first, "What is reality?" What am I going to have to deal with? Is the first reality God? Have I learned to meet it in that way? I can not manage it.

Help me God to be truthful, genuine, to recognize where I need to bring the reality of your Kingdom to bear on the life of another person. Help me to know when I need to send to someone by my prayer the joy you have given me into their heart.

Those are first thing in the morning questions. And, What am I going to pursue? Who am I going to be? What am I going to learn from Jesus today about how to do all that?

I have had to learn things like it is not what I accomplish but the person I become. My life is infinitely ahead of me compared to this life.

We sing, *"When we've been there 10,000 years."* Occasionally we need to think it. What are you going to be doing in 10,000 years from now?

What kind of a person will I be in God's world as He brings that to me.

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I am very convinced that God's intent for each of us is to become the kind of person that He can empower to do what we want.

That's what human history is about. It's what "we" want. Now, our wanters will have to go through some changing - the last point is about changing the "wanter".

As we live in the school of Jesus we can progressively come to know the goodness of the rightness under God and we are prepared to sign off on the goodness of doing the thing that is right. [46:40]

Then we look at Jesus teaching through different eyes. When we hear Jesus say, "Love your enemies" - we don't just think, "Oh no!" We think that is better than hating them.

How can I do that? Only if I come back up the list. I have to say **reality is in favor of loving your enemies**. If I do that I am not going to be destroyed. To love them does not mean you do what they want. That's desire. To love someone means you may do what they don't want. You're acting for their good not simply their desire. You may be doing for their good but not their desire. It is not a long trip if we set ourselves to do it. Jesus will bring us to the place where in all of those things we live very comfortably and we live out of strength. We see the hand of God moving to accomplish things we can not begin to budge. Our only hope is that God will act. Sometimes the biggest problem is for us to get out of the way.

God's address is the end of your rope. When you get down there you will find Him. As long as I've got a few tricks left, He'll probably let me work them out. But when I can turn loose and trust the God who is love who has come to act in human history and to allow those who seek Him to find Him, then I can know in my work, my church, my family, God is real. If I surrender to Him and live in His way, He'll bring to pass things I can't even begin to imagine. That's what the scripture says - "*Beyond all we can ask or think*" when we have learned to live in that reality.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Session I Q & A

[48:30]

Q - Say again "the intention of God for each of us."

A - That we should become the kind of person who can do what we want. That's what you would like with your own children - to empower them to do what they want. Unfortunately that takes some training. All of us would want

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to do that for our loved ones. That's what God wants for us. God is creative love, creative will and He made us that way. The spiritual dimension of a human being is one thing we need to try to understand and how that interacts with the spiritual nature of God. God doesn't want robots, He wants friends. Jesus, "I no longer call your servants, I call you friends." A friend knows what they are doing. A servant waits for orders. I believe right now for each of us God is calling us increasingly in an area of fellowship with Him that He doesn't have to tell us what to do.

One of the things wrong with WWJD - Not told what to do. We need to move in that direction as well. We need to know already what to do and be prepared to go with that.

As we grow in how to become a really good person - Be a disciple of Jesus Christ - I'm learning from Him how to live my life as He would live my life if he were I. It's the unity of character development that leads to that point.

Q - [Inaudible]

A - The rule of God would move into what I'm doing now. *Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* I'm praying today when I act it will be with God. My actions will be Kingdom actions.

Col. 3:17, "*Whatever you do...in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Means to act on His behalf from His resources and that would be Kingdom. He is the King and we are working with Him. It means we are praying in Jesus name means you are praying on His behalf for His purposes. It's crucial to really understand - Kingdom praying - Prayer integrate in our life is thinking about it's role in the Kingdom of God.

Praying is an arrangement by which God releases some of His kingdom, perhaps as much as we can stand, to act with us. We are invoking some of His Kingdom. The Kingdom is God in action. The only place His kingdom has not come is in human life. He permits that for the time being.

Q - [Inaudible]

A - It's done pretty well in Heaven. Take up my whole life in that reality which will be in Heaven. Jesus teaching, "those who keep my word will never die" (John 8:53) means people who keep His word when death happens they will not know that it has happened until perhaps some times later. Perhaps a continuity that their life is so immersed in it. John 11 - He abolished death. I think immersion in the Kingdom is exactly what He means - simply moving on with our identity and our experience that actually we may not know what has happened until later.

Q - [Inaudible]

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A - A practical ministry test and we have that as a problem in our congregations - Our people don't think it's real. That's why the issue of **death** hits so hard because they don't understand the spiritual reality of the Kingdom of God. Our answer is that we live it. It will take folks a little while to come around. They may think we're just faking it. It will come home because God will bring it home because of the way we speak His Word and live out His life. God's presence in our lives. I'm first a disciple. I am learning this.

I'll confess, as a young minister I put on a lot of fake. I was talking about a lot of things I didn't believe myself. I had to go through a lot of years growing thru that. We need to step out in the reality of it, count on it. Let our own will and character shape around it and then let it stand. I believe we will see it have a remarkable effect on others.

* TV Commercials - sad to think people are really living for that.

The idea "God is enough and I don't need anything else" people can't comprehend it. We have to bring it to them in concrete life. We have to show what it is like. We have to show we are remarkably different in what we're unhappy about.

One of the barometers in the spiritual life is how irritable I am. My wife can often detect that in my tone of voice so I know I need to do something to change my approach.

We have to be completely honest or maybe as honest as you can. Recognize that requires a lot of grace. In our fellowships and staff meetings we would let things stand and not veil or cover anything.

~ ~ ~ End of Session I ~ ~ ~

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Session II - Finding the Kingdom of God Now

[RT:

54:20]

• Summary of Session I

The sufficiency of God is the very center of what we have to enjoy and experience in ourselves and what we have to give to others.

"Tis the Savior who can give sweetest pleasures while we live.

Tis the Savior must supply solid comfort when we die.

Be this living Christ my friend and my joys will never end."

That's what God brings to us. All of our teaching must be focused on what all of our living must be focused on - the sufficiency of God. God is enough. We have to come to that through Jesus Christ because He is the one who helps us to know that, not just as a theory but as a reality and a place in which we live and we abide. He teaches us to abide in the vine.

John 15 - I am the vine and my Father is the vine keeper.

Psalm 16 - *"I have set the Lord always before me. He is at my right hand.*

I shall not be moved." (v. 8)

Psalm 46 - God is the living water. God is in the midst of His people.

It is the completeness of God we must think about as we think about times like these.

At times like these. Some say times change. I don't think so. Outward dressing changes but inward issues are always the same.

Where is my fixed point? What am I resting on?

When we have learned about God through Jesus Christ and we come to peace as Paul says in Romans 5:1-5, *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ"* leads us into the marvelous progression of chapter 5 - we have access to the grace in which we stand and we rejoice in God and exalt in our tribulations at the same time. The passage winds up with the hope that throbs in us and does not make us ashamed because the love of God is spread about in our hearts by the Spirit of Christ that is within us.

~ ~

Session II - Finding the Kingdom of God Now thru Jesus & His Words

• Obedience in Knowing God

[3:45]

We are talking about "Knowing" the Kingdom of God.

Knowledge (def.) "You have knowledge if you have capacity to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience."

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We have to have a theory of knowledge that includes the Bible. The Bible comes to us and announces the truth of God and gives us direction as to what His ways are. The Ten Commandments are wonderful and great because they express first God's ways - that's knowledge of Him. We begin to approach.

Obedience is the organ of knowledge in the spiritual life.

The way we come to know God and His kingdom is by obeying. Obeying turns out to be a pilgrimage. It's a trip. We find that out when we start out to obey God from where we are we find out we can not do it. Then we are drawn on and we find out how to do it. We are changed inwardly. The outcome is that we are transformed so that doing the Law and doing the things that Jesus said are simply expressions of who we are.

"A good tree can not bear bad fruit." (Matthew 7:18)

When we look at the teachings of scripture and the things Jesus said and the Kingdom of God, We want to remember...

Our aim is not to do what Jesus said but to become the kind of people who would naturally do that.

My aim is first for me and out of that I try to help others do the same. That's what saves us from the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees. If you reflect on it you will realize one of the disasters that befalls the teachings of Jesus is that people turn them into legalisms.

If we meditate deeply on the Bible and what it teaches, we will find many things that free us up from that. One is Jesus doesn't say the same thing almost the same way. That's true with Paul - Read Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 are not the same. Luke 6 "Sermon on the Plains" and Matthew 5-7 are different. We shouldn't be bothered by that and we won't be if we understand **all of these teachings are expressions of a kind of life.** [Kingdom Living] The Sermon on the Mount, or Paul elsewhere, gives us instructions, what he is saying is a picture of a kind of life. It's really made clear if you read things in context. You'll see the larger picture of a kind of life.

Colossians

He's already laid out a foundation of teaching the greatness of the greatness of Christ and how we are transformed from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son He loves. After laying out the greatness of Christ and the beauty of Christ, he writes,

"If you are risen with Christ, seek the things that are above. Set your affections on things above not on things of the earth for you're dead and

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your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life will appear, our lives appear, (paraphrase - then you get to find out who you are), then you also shall appear with Him glorious." (Colossians 3)

The glory of the life we have that is now God is hidden in Christ because apparent. The next step is to mortify your members - you begin to let die off the things in your life you can do on your own, not a very glorious list - fornication, uncleanness, sinful desires, covetousness, for what things sake the wrath of God. Then put off the old person and put on the new. That's a life of the Kingdom of God.

• The Kingdom of God

Does the Gospel I preach have a natural tendency to produce disciples as distinguished from consumers of religious goods and services? [11:20]

We must focus on the idea of the Kingdom of God because that is the gospel Jesus preached. It wasn't that there was a Kingdom of God. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God was now open to everyone who would simply place their confidence in Him.

* John the Baptist warmed up the crowd with the message,
"Repent, the Kingdom is at hand."

He did a great work identifying Jesus as the Messiah. He came in the old tradition of the prophets and that made him able to identify Jesus. That means the Kingdom is available.

The Scofield Bible - misunderstanding that the Kingdom somehow got postponed and the interpretation of it as a political reality rather than the clear intention of the gospels is that when Jesus is saying it is hand it is available to you now.

Do I preach the Kingdom of God "at hand" available to you now?

* "Turn, the Daniels Center is at hand"

Matthew 11:11-12; Luke 16:16 - People are running into the kingdom

* A Leper - Matthew 8 - First thing after the Sermon on the Mount a leper comes to Jesus. He had heard Jesus and watched Him. "If you would, you could make me clean." That's people pushing their way into the Kingdom of God. Jesus says in his typical generosity, "I will." He does what you don't do with lepers, He touched him. I don't think he touched the leper like you touch a hot stove. I have a feeling He put his arm around Him. He was living in the power of the Kingdom of God and He brought that to others.

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* Roman Centurion - His request for the healing of his servant or his son. In the generosity of the Kingdom, Jesus says, "I will come heal him."

"Just say the word and it will be done." You will recall that Jesus said of that man, *"I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel."* What was so great about that man's faith was the ease with which it came out. He was a man under authority. He recognized Kingdom reality. He knew how it worked. He was a man under authority. "I say a word and people jump." When he said it, he was a man under authority. That's the Kingdom.

"Repent, the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand" - Jesus is simply saying, "Look, trust me" for the Kingdom was at hand in Him.

* Disciples - Sending his disciples out. *"If they reject you, blow the dust off your feet and say to them, 'Nevertheless, the Kingdom of God has come near to you'."* It was in them. **The Kingdom of God is where God is acting and He was acting in them.**

• The Problem in Modern Day Teaching about the Kingdom

We need to understand this is a great shift...I know it's a huge challenge. This is not the gospel we normally hear. In one way or another, it is positioned away from us. On the left one way and on the right another way. What we hear are "Gospels of sin management". The gospel is about sin and what you do about it. You often get the impression if we hadn't sinned, we would not have a need for God.

But we need God because of who we are and because who He is and because the nature of our life. Sin has to be dealt with. Manifestations in structural evil is important and it's manifestations in guilt has to be dealt with.

Evangelicals and Liberals not dealing with the other side. This becomes a huge burden to bear if you are trying to minister. We have to step through to the center and lift up Jesus as the King. That's what He is.

* Teresa of Avila addresses the Lord as "Your Majesty".

He is the King and He has a Kingdom. A proper hermeneutic of the New Testament is a picture of how this vision of the Kingdom of God and Jesus come together. As you read at the end of the book of Acts Paul in Rome preaching Jesus and the Kingdom and they come together.

If we have Jesus without the Kingdom, you're in trouble.

If we have the Kingdom without Jesus, you're dead.

If we can preach this, make it real, let that water flow out from us, place our confidence in Jesus, that will mean we begin to step into His words and put them into practice.

* **John 6:63** - *"The words that I speak unto you are spirit, they are life."*

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They are living. That 's the nature of this reality that is the kingdom - it is a living active presence. It works with words! The Centurion was right about that. Taking the word of Christ and putting it into practice.

• The Great Commission - Matthew 28

[21:45]

I believe when Jesus sent his disciples out it was not to start churches as we know them but to establish beachheads of the Kingdom of God to be a perpetual and ongoing moral revolution which is still in progress. Churches spin out of that and become a part of it. The primary action is the Kingdom. That is a saving realization for us as we do our work wherever we are placed. It is the Kingdom that is working and we are doing our part within that context.

~ *"I have all authority over heaven and earth."* We're not going out on our own. We are going out on His behalf.

~ *"Make Apprentices to me among people of every kind."*

~ Baptism - *"Submerge them in the reality of the Trinitarian God."* Where two are three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst."

Baptism means immersion in the reality of the Trinity.

~ *"Lead them to do everything I have told you to do."*

You start at the top.

If you don't make apprentices, you won't have the presence.

If you don't have the presence, you can't do the teaching.

The heart breaking reality today is that because we don't normally have a gospel that naturally leads to discipleship, we have divorced being a Christian from being a disciple.

We have a sea of professing Christians who have never heard of discipleship as something relevant to them. We have this idea of being a disciple of Jesus is an option. We have special para-church groups who deal with discipleship rather than seeing the local church dealing with discipleship. That's crucial. You really can't go on if you don't come through discipleship. Everything afterwards that you attempt if you don't come that way, will be hindered or just impossible.

• Who is an Apprentice of Jesus?

[27:30]

We are told to make disciples - How would we know if we met one?

What would we aim at if we are trying to make a disciple?

As Jesus' apprentice, disciple or student, I am learning from Him how to lead my life in the Kingdom of God as He would lead my life if He were I.

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I don't lead His life. The challenge to me is to lead my life as a particular person born in a particular place with a people and a history. That's where I'm positioned. My task is to learn how to do that as He would do that if He were I. Applies to women as well men, young as well as old, any classification of human beings.

A disciple is being with Him learning to be like Him.

* Trade - Find someone who is practicing and you align yourself with them and you stay with them. At some point they say, "You do it."

That's the relationship Jesus had with His initial disciples and that's the one He offers to me. Other disciples can play a role in that but I am always the disciple of Jesus.

I Corinthians 11, *"Follow me as I follow Christ."*

It is that relationship of discipleship that begins to allow us to know the reality of the Kingdom. It is how **you seek first the Kingdom of God by discipleship.**

When we approach our contemporary world, we have many folks who have professed faith in Christ but they are not here [discipleship]. Because they are not here, they don't grow and they don't become Christlike. So often we find ourselves in situations when have to deal with Christians who are mean, not generous, not loving and they may have righteous meanness. They associated rightness with being mean. They don't have the living water flowing around them. They are the enforcer of righteousness. They will come down on one another. So often our churches are battlegrounds and families are the same way. They honestly often do not know there is something else. **It's a challenge to bring people along and give them a vision of something else.**

• What does it look like to Become a Disciple?

[32:20]

As you progress as a disciple, you know more and more about the reality of the Kingdom of God.

~ The Sermon on the Mount = Jesus leads us into the Kingdom of God.

That's what the Beatitudes are all about - Proclamations of Kingdom reality. That's what he has been teaching all along.

The Beatitudes gives us the Blessedness of the Kingdom. That's the foundation for His teaching. He gives the Beatitudes trying to help people

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understand the way the Kingdom is open to the people on the human scale who are normally not thought to be well off. Kingdom - First last, last first.

"Woe be to those who are rich...Woe be to those that are laughing now."

- Don't let me catch you laughing.

* Novel & Movie, *Name of the Rose*

You have to get off the legalism and understand this is the proclamation of the Kingdom and the goodness of life in the Kingdom of God.

5:17 - *"Do not think I came to abolish the law and the prophets."*

This looked like something contrary to the Law and the Prophets that had been twisted to exalt the human over the divine.

"You are the light of the world, the salt of the earth."

They weren't used to hearing that. He has to stop them, correct their thinking and verse 20 is fundamental to understanding this.

5:20 - *"Unless your righteousness exceeds Scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the Kingdom of the heavens"* the rule of God right down here.

To enter that you have to go beyond the teaching of the Scribes & Pharisees. Jesus goes beyond that into our thoughts & feelings.

Teaching beyond the Scribes & Pharisees. Their righteousness is always, "I did not do anything wrong." Jesus talks about our thoughts, our feelings.

5:21- 26: Jesus begins to talk about anger, contempt, cultivated lust. That's where we have to go to surpass the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees through an internal transformation that transforms our body itself so that it is ready to do the right thing rather than the wrong thing. As we do that we come to know the "action of God" in our lives. We can't do that on our own. It looks rather hopeless. **When we put ourselves in to it as disciples of Jesus, we begin to experience the upholding and empowerment to become different kinds of people.**

- Lives free of Contempt & Anger - We can live without anger and contempt. Jesus progressively on this teaching goes deeper and deeper. Think of all the harm that comes from anger.

* 25,000-30,000 U.S. murders.

How many would not be murdered if it were not for anger?

- Contempt - Filthy language is always an expression of contempt. Contempt is a twin brother of anger. Watch a family or church fight and see how quickly it moves from anger to contempt or the anger is predicated on the contempt that is already there. Jesus like a surgeon puts his knife into the roots of our behavior and says that's where we change.

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- Gift Offering - Leave the gift at the altar. Jesus is turning that around and saying, "*Go make things right and come back.*" If you want to be right, it is not just a matter of not killing them.

- Legal contest - That situation is filled with anger & contempt. Jesus is saying when you go to law, be friendly. Care about them. Love them. See what can be done in a genuine attitude of helping. Don't impose it just because Jesus said it. See what can be done in a general attitude of helping.

Jesus is describing how we handle human relationships love all in the framework of learning to live in the Kingdom of the heavens. As a disciple, I am learning how to do that.

- Swearing - Verbal controlling people. Don't swear to invoke God to get someone to do what you want them to do. We call it a "song and a dance". Jesus says, "*Let Yes be yes and No be no.*" Don't try to get people to do things by the temple, by your head. Don't invoke things that have nothing to do with the case to get your way.

Jesus is saying you become the kind of person in His fellowship and His teaching for whom this is the easy, natural way to be. That spreads in our congregations and communities and reach the whole world with this kind of new humanity in the Kingdom of God. That's what He is really talking about. **This is how we seek the Kingdom and find it as the center of our life enables us to be the kind of people we all know Jesus intended us to be.** A great burden goes off and we are allowed to stand and minister in the community and let the living water flow and watch Him do His work and rejoice in the Lord. [\[End of teaching @ 45:00\]](#)

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Session II Q & A

[45:10]

Q - How do we start to turn people's thinking around so they want to be apprentices?

A - We have to start with the proclamation of the Kingdom. **How do we make a disciple? Ravish them with the Kingdom of God.** Make them realize this is the greatest opportunity in life. Jesus parables focus on that - Pearl of Great Price, Treasure in the Field. That's the positive side of the *"Take up your cross and follow"*. This is a great opportunity." That's what we have to make apparent to people.

Q - When did this strike you?

A - What distinguished it was this is whole life. This covers everything. It effects my family, my vocation, the way I study. All this was a manifestation of the presence of God and His Kingdom. I had not gotten over the idea that the Kingdom was for a different time. The message I got was "Forgiveness" - How does this connect to the rest of life? I was trying to understand why were people so drawn to Jesus and not so drawn to me? If they don't see that in me, I really don't have anything to say to them. I turned back to the gospels and take them seriously and they led me on. There is a great difference. I remember how that surfaced in my life and how it affected my ministry.

Q - How does the "not yet" of the "already/not yet" work?

A - The "not yet" is very important - it is the "blessed hope" as Paul calls it. I like to stand under imminence of His return at any time. There is a future. The problem with presenting it as the "already/not yet" is that the weight nearly always falls on the absence. If you make that ["already"] personal, the "not yet" will take care of itself. That hope is based upon what God is doing now. It isn't just a hope for the future but something God is doing now and that gives us hope. I am very strong on the hope and the future. I think our problem is with the present.

Q - How would you define Christian or nominal church member. How do we deal with people with people who are not wanting to be an apprentice?

A - It is very difficult to do that. "Christian" means all kind of things.

Q - [inaudible]

A - You are going to have decide in your church what this means to you. It is imposed by your church culture. The clearer thing is to decide what relationship your church has to be with all of this.

Q - [inaudible]

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A - Preach the Kingdom of God and Christ as Savior in that context and then allow people to respond. Some will want to go on and others will respond, "I didn't sign on for this."

Q - [Inaudible]

A - Bring the Kingdom of God to bear on ordinary life and watch the effects and something like a church will emerge from that. That's the only way we can do it. We have to bring the Kingdom of God in reality to the world and watch it grow. You don't need to have a budget, special training or a even a program. It is me here, now, trusting and living in the Kingdom, speaking to others as appropriate and growing together. That's how it starts.

~ ~ ~ **End of Session II** ~ ~ ~

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Session III - Living Without Hurry & Worry

[RT:

50:41]

• Living in His Kingdom

Entering into this kind of life [Kingdom Living] we begin to experience a power we can count on in our ministry.

The Question - *What do we do with this?*

We preach the Kingdom of God and the availability of the Kingdom of God to everyone. We make it clear that we are invited to bring our kingdom into God's kingdom. One of the ways I have to open up a discussion with people is to ask them how they are doing with their kingdom (queendom).

The human being essentially is a ruling and reigning being.

* Watch a child wanting to do things on his own - *"Let me do it."*

That's built into our nature. God is not only creative, He creates creators and invites us to take that into His Kingdom. [2:10]

Genesis 1:26 - the Image of God in a human being is responsibility, creativity, to have dominion. Created in His image to have dominion.

I Peter 5:6-7, *"Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that in due season He may exalt you."*

You were made to be exalted in righteousness. When we learn how to humble ourselves in "The mighty hand of God" that's His kingdom. That means to learn how to act in dependence upon Him, the Kingdom, the Living Water. As we learn how to do that, things like *Anger & Contempt* take on a whole different cast. I refer you to *The Divine Conspiracy* chapter 5.

On Anger...Anything you can do with anger you can do much better without it. You can stand for what is right so much more strongly without anger, so much more clearly. The moment you let your anger get in to it, it's no longer about what is right it's about who is going to win. Then we're totally off the track. We've got two kingdoms in conflict and neither one of them is probably the Kingdom of God. So, we learn how this [Kingdom Living] moves. Gradually the contentment in God takes over our lives.

• Learning to Be Content - Philippians 4:4-13

[4:30]

v. 4 - *"Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice."*

God is the only foundation of joy.

My peace lies in the greatness of God and in nothing else.

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v. 6 - *"Be anxious for nothing but in everything in prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God and the God of peace will keep your heart and mind - set a guard over your heart."*

You won't understand how it works like the farmer who did not know how the grain grew, just up it came. [Mark 4:26-29] You will have a peace you don't understand. You are a person who lives with thankfulness and gratitude with God and when issues are faced, you take them up with God. It doesn't make you passive, it makes you more confident, bolder, makes you more able to stand and act because you're not wasting all your energy on worry. You have much greater clarity in what you do.

v. 8 - *"Whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, if there is any excellence, anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."*

* Alfred E. Newman, *Mad Magazine*, "Who me, worry?"

This is based on the vision of God. Paul was blessed with encounters with Jesus Christ that made him so sure of this great stream of living water which is God that he says, *"concentrate on these things"* in Philippians 4:8.

"Everything good thing comes down from God" (James 1:17)
God is bursting with goodness and that's why He created the world. He created beings such as you and I in order that we can contribute to the goodness of the world. We are set free to do that. Our work as ministers, in our lives, in our families are all devoted to that.

v. 9 - *"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, put into practice."*

I have to be able to say that. I can't just talk about it. That means I have to be realistic and accept grace because there are things in me perhaps that have not been lined up with what we're talking about. I have to be able to say, *"my confidence is still in God and in what little I can, I want to point you to Him through me."* I am not the issue but I am the issue in my responsibility to do what Paul said and I have to find a way to do that.

v. 11 - *"Because of your concern for me. Not that I speak from want..."*

(Psalm 23 - *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"*)

"but I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances..."

**He had found the great fountain of sufficiency
in God through Jesus Christ.**

v. 12 - *"Humble means and prosperity...I have learned the secret of being filled, both having abundance and suffering."*

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He's talking about being able to have abundance as well as suffering. Sometimes it's harder to endure abundance as it is suffering.

* *"Wear the world like a loose robe that touches you at few places and there lightly."* St. Francis

v. 13 - *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

You don't want to take that out of context. In order to enter into that, we have to be responsible for how we direct ourselves. That's where spiritual disciplines come in. Paul had learned to do these things through a process of experience and in large measure an experience that he had chosen.

• Choosing to Practice Kingdom Living thru Disciplines [11:00]

If I am going to live in this kind of world and this kind of life [Kingdom Living], I must do it because of the practices I have chosen for myself. I am planning for it.

You do not become a disciple, a person who is content no matter what happens, unless you have chosen how to live your life.

That's one of the biggest problems for us today. The teaching of **GRACE** that we have has made us passive. Grace is treated as something that comes upon you like lightning not something you make a point of cultivating. Disciplines are about cultivating grace.

II Peter 3:18 - *"Grow in grace and our knowledge of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* - Something we're supposed to do by disciplines.

Spiritual Discipline (def.) - "An activity in my power which enables me to accomplish what I can not do by direct effort." [12:25]

I can't be 'content' no matter what the circumstances unless I have received grace to do that. I can't do that by effort. The Scribes & Pharisees depend upon effort. They tried to do the right thing or at least not do the wrong thing. That's the mistake they made. That's why Jesus said, *"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"* which is hypocrisy. The reason why it is hypocrisy is that the Pharisee tries so hard to be righteous and takes the wrong approach and fails. Because they are so concerned about righteousness, they revert to covering up and pretending and being something other than what they really are.

This route of discipline is the way we become inwardly transformed so that we can turn loose of external righteousness and be who we are as Apprentices of Jesus and learn what we need to learn.

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How do you learn not to be angry? You can't just say,

"I'm not going to be angry anymore."

Like the confirmed alcoholic who says, "I'm never going to drink again", he's going to. If he is going to be faithful with AA, then you've got some hope.

**When a person becomes prepared to take means
that they began to make progress.**

• **Spiritual Disciplines & Grace**

[14:45]

The Spiritual Discipline, from the Christian understanding, is a discipline focused upon enhancement of the interactive life of grace in the spiritual Kingdom of the Heavens.

Grace - (def) "God acting in my life to accomplish what I can not do on my own."

Grace is not about guilt, it's about help. Of course, we need help with guilt but that's not the only thing we need help with. [15:10]

Ephesians 3:8 - *"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."*

That was a grace of God doing in Paul's life what he could not do on his own. The person who really burns grace is a saint because everything they do depends on grace. They burn grace like a 747 burns fuel on takeoff. A sinner just needs forgiveness. God has plenty of grace. He is not in short supply.

Disciplines enable us to grow in grace - grow in the degree to which God is active in our lives. That's also "knowledge." (II Peter 3:18) Knowledge is always interactive relationship.

- Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning.

Earning is an attitude. Effort is action.

Salvation is by grace through faith but we have to understand what that means. It means God's action in our lives. Salvation is a very encompassing term. It doesn't just refer to making it in when you die, it means deliverance and it refers to all aspects of our lives. [18:00]

Grace comes and we, by the chosen things that we do, we learn how to receive grace. We fill our minds with the right kinds of things. Primarily it is our minds.

Romans 12:2 - *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

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Discipline is primarily something that has bearing on where our mind is.

Psalm 16:8 - *"I set the Lord always before me.
He is at my right hand. I will not be moved."*

* St. Patrick's Prayer

I bind unto myself today
The strong Name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same
The Three in One, the One in Three.

I bind this today to me forever
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;
His baptism in Jordan river,
His death on Cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb,
His riding up the heavenly way,
His coming at the day of doom
I bind unto myself today.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Joshua 1:8 - *"This book of the Law shall not depart from you mouth but you shall meditate on it day & night."*

This is a choice. Where do I put my attention? This is one of the ways we can begin to bring grace into our lives. We can adopt practices like solitude & silence. We can begin to do the things that will change us inwardly so that our automatic thoughts and feelings become different not because we are trying but because we have changed inwardly. The difference of focus here is absolutely crucial.

• **The Problem We Face**

[21:45]

People say, "I don't have **TIME** for all of that."

All of us today tend to live lives that are consumed by all the things we have to do and the responsibility of people looking to us to make things happen. We have a radical choice to make. God never gives anyone too much to do. He does not keep our schedule. We do.

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The greatest challenge to our faith is to make sure we do the things we need to do to keep ourselves centered in God and keep ourselves environed in grace. [22:45]

The spiritual disciplines all come under that heading. They are not works of righteousness. They don't earn you anything. **They are wisdom that enables you to stay in the place of grace.** If we are not clear about that, we will not be able to as the apostle Paul says, "*take care of yourselves.*" You have to have faith in the goodness of God that allows you to do that. That will nearly always will take the form of...

I am the one who is in charge of my time under God. I decide how to use my time. That's a great act of faith in the goodness of God that says God never gives anyone too much to do. If I have too much to do it was not because God gave it to me. Somehow I have not understood how to make the connections.

● Four Phases of Our Lives

[24:25]

Confusion about some phases in our lives puts us in a position where we are set up for a fall.

I. **Job** - What you are paid to do - how you earn a living.

II. **Ministry** - God's special work in your time that He has specifically allotted to you. God is doing something where you are and a part of that He has given to you to work with Him to accomplish.

III. **Work** [Body of...] - Distinguish from your job & ministry. Your work is the total amount of lasting good that I will produce in my lifetime. For example - your family. You don't want your family to be your job or your job to be your family. You don't want your work to be your ministry or your ministry your work. You don't want your family to be your ministry. If you don't handle this one carefully, Paul's statements in Philippians 4, "*whatever is true, honorable, right, lovely...*" you're going to have a hard time with that verse. That's not your ministry. You're focusing now on something much larger. It's all under God.

IV. **Life** - You! I want to suggest to you that God is more interested in that than any of the other circles. Your life is the person you are becoming. We think so often of our life in terms of our accomplishments. I think that's a very tragic mistake. What you get out of your life and what God gets our

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of your life is the person you become. That life is just you. The tragedy is when we allow the job to expand to the outside and take it all in.

Where can you stand to avoid that?

[28:20]

You will not be surprised to hear me say you stand in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is over all of this. It is the Kingdom of God that you were brought into this world. God has foreseen a kingdom for you from the foundation of the world. He had you in mind when that little baby was born. He knew what was going on. He had something in mind for you and that was that you would have a kingdom that you would bring into His kingdom and redemption would occur in every aspect of your life. You would be led on in to eternal life here and now. Paradise is already in session. Eternal life is not starting later, it is already running. This is eternity that we're in.

We should know this and dwell in it and learn how to deal with this issue of time. If we don't, then we're going to have a hard time bringing the fullness of God to others because we won't be enjoying it ourselves.

* *The Art of Pastoring*, William Martin

[29:50]

"If you fill your calendar with important appointments, you'll have no time for God." William Martin

"The greatest enemy of love for Jesus is service to Jesus." Henri Nouwen

William Martin continued,

"Work a modest day then step back and rest and this will keep you close to God. One's daily planner tells plenty about one's spiritual formation. It reveals volumes...If you're working more than 50 hours a week, you're not doing it for God no matter how eloquent your rationalizations. Take a long, prayerful, meditative look at your calendar. Who are you trying to impress? God? Give me a break. The congregation? Possibly. Yourself? Bingo! Now cut some big chunks out for family, rest, prayer, meditation, flower sniffing. When you've done that you'll be more sensitive to the path of God."

"Only lazy people are busy." CS Lewis

(These things are infuriating. How dare these people say these things!)

What he means is if you are unwilling to exert yourself to take control of your time, you will constantly be torn to pieces by the demands of others.

• **Hurry Free Living**

[32:20]

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We need to think deeply about disciplines such as solitude and silence. The two largest disciplines in my life are fasting and scripture memorization. They do more for me than anything else. You have to establish an inner quiet before God before you can fast and memorize. Then that has a back effect that helps you carry solitude wherever you are.

This is the only way we can go forward to learn and live without hurry and worry. I do counsel everyone and myself - Learn to live without hurry.

Relentlessly eliminate hurry from your life.

You can move fast without being in a hurry. You work hard from a restful position. **You stop hurry when you lay down control over outcomes.** You put it back in God's hands and that allows you to step free to have a life. Your work nourishes you and your ministry flows. The results of your job will be much greater than they could be otherwise. When we come to the job, what we're looking for has to flow from our life.

I know people are going to remember who I was after they have long forgotten what I said and probably what I did. That's not in my control, that's God's. I'm not in charge of that.

What I am in charge of is how I spend my time. By faith, I have to put myself in the position to receive the abundance of that river - "*The streams whereof make glad the city of God.*" (Ps. 46) I have to be right in the middle of that. Then I can work hard, I can go fast, but I'm resting all the time.

* "*The Wind, One Brilliant Day*" by Antonio Machado

The wind, one brilliant day, called to my soul with an odor of jasmine.

"In return for the odor of my jasmine, I'd like all the odor of your roses."

I said, *"I have no roses; all the flowers of my garden are dead."*

The wind said, *"Well then, I'll take the withered petals and the yellow leaves."*

The wind left. And I wept. And I said to myself:

"What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?"

That garden is you. It is your soul that is the most inclusive part of your life. God meant your life to be a garden blooming with beautiful, strong, true, good things that He has nourished and it's open for all of us to choose that way. When we do things like the commands of Jesus, the teachings of the Bible, the needs around us we can meet from the depths of our soul and bring the Kingdom of God to the flow around us and always look for even a greater fulfillment.

~ ~ ~ **End of Session 3 Teaching** ~ ~ ~

Session III Q & A

[37:10]

Q - Resources at dwillard.org?

A - Yes and it's all free

"For Such A Time As This - Streams in the Desert"

Baylor University, February 2004 - 3 Sessions

Q - What is the process of making disciples thru small groups & one-on-ones?

A - You establish the context of discipleship by preaching the Kingdom - the gospels, the miracles, the teachings and dwelling in them. You have to establish that context. As you do that, you will see individuals begin to respond. The form it will take will be, *"I've been looking for this. I knew this had to be true."* Work with those people. Others will be more cautious. Some will be worried you're not preaching the gospel. Take those who manifest a readiness to go on and arrange special times for them.

* Oak Hills Church - "One Thing Retreats" - Anger, Lust, Coveting

All these things Jesus teaches are for us. It is accessible to anyone who will put their confidence in Him and learn how to do it.

I would do...Disciplines; Shepherd them in practices; Have Groups

It is very likely be a lot of people won't be interested.

Jesus on the Parable of the Sower.

Watch for people to move through the different soils of the Parable. Don't read that parable as assigning an eternal destiny but a response to the Word at a given time. Bring the Word of the Kingdom both in ourselves and in our teaching. I'm apt to be misunderstood on this point. This is a real scholarly, homiletical deal. We have to overcome a misleading hermeneutic. There's a lot of work to be done - real teaching, real pedagogy, helping people read the scripture and see how it applies to life. A real battle goes on here. We have to stay in there gently, lovingly and teach clearly. Focus on the gospels and treat Paul and John and let it come out of that.

There is one gospel - "You can trust Jesus Christ and He will bring you into the Kingdom of the Heavens now and He will be your teacher and you will grow in that."

Pay attention to the people responding and it will grow.

Q - How did I lose the enthusiasm of simple living with Christ in my youth group in So CA? [43:15]

A - [43:45] You have become a responsible leader. What happens is people will identify you and say, "This leader can help us" and you will fall heir to all their expectations of what you are supposed to do and that will encouraged you to take charge and be responsible to them.

You need to stand in the simplicity of Kingdom living. That's a beautiful thing you can have wherever you are but you will have to find the practices that will bring you back into and that will loosen you up from being a responsible leader. Probably your heart is there already. We can find our way if we decide to be intentional about it. If we are in leadership, we'll have to re-educate everyone to go along with us.

"For Such A Time As This - Streams in the Desert"

Baylor University, February 2004 - 3 Sessions

Q - [long, inaudible comments/question on Doctrine of Forgiveness]

A - [46:50] I think you have to begin with faith in Christ. Everything else fans out from that. We've got ourselves in this odd position that you can trust Jesus for our forgiveness of sins but not for our next sandwich, not for guidance today, not for the power to minister to this individual I am with right now.

[Continued comments from the inquirer.]

What is the center? The center is faith in Jesus Christ.

...If you think forgiveness is the essence of it, people who are taught that "salvation is forgiveness" do not make the natural connection to Christ as teacher so they don't become disciples. You can't become a disciple if you don't have a teacher.

This is a part of our religious history. This is a hangover from the fundamentalist/modernist controversy.

The conservative side chose doctrine and forgiveness and regarded "teacher" as code word for not divine.

The liberal side said "teacher" and forget all that other stuff.

"There is one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ."

The central reality is mediator-ship. One part of that is justification and forgiveness. You can't pull that out and say that is it. Practically that is the way it works out. if you look at congregations that have been told forgiveness is salvation, you will not see a natural development in discipleship. Observe and see. I may be wrong.

From the Calvinistic side, people say, *"Gratitude will make you a disciple."* Again you just have to look, it isn't doing it. If you really understand it like Calvin & Luther, it will sweep your life.

What we have come to understand today is that forgiveness doesn't do that. The biblical route is to trust Jesus and that will handle all the issues including and essentially forgiveness.

I know this is a difficult thing. God will lead you and give you grace in the way you should go.

~ ~ ~ End of Session III @ 50:40 ~ ~ ~