



SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE LEADER

Christian Leadership



CHAPTER 1. CHRISTIAN ACTIVISM

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Christian activism is Christians seeking to be involved in the issues and needs of the day and time. Wesleyans in the 1700's in England sought to minister to people that others didn't care about. To be called by Christ is to be called into the body of Christ. A biblical model is that every member is a full-fledged minister of the gospel without distinction between clergy and laity.

I. Personal Introduction

I was a pastor for twenty-eight years ministering all over the United States and I am now at Asbury Theological Seminary. After being a pastor for so long, now I am training pastors. We are going to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and bless and use this for God's glory and his kingdom. I pray that there will be something here that the Lord will use to help you wherever you are and whenever you are. I hope these lectures will better equip you as a minister of the Gospel whether ordained or not. I pray during this teaching series that the Holy Spirit leads and that God's goodness will contain and keep everything from any error. We want to hear from God, his life and liberty and his great love for all of us.

II. Sociological and Ecclesiological Issues

A. 1800's in English: I want to start out by looking back at some sociological issues and ecclesiological issues. Ecclesiology is the whole church and how the Lord works through his body, the bride. I want to look back at some trends that go back to the 1800s to get an overview of what happened in England at that time and why that matters to us today. There are dynamics behind the history that we find ourselves in at this moment, especially in how we work and think about ministry. I am going to post a sermon that was by a famous Baptist preacher by the name of Alexander McClaren. He has a whole volume of preaching and teaching messages that is great exegetical work with solid material behind it. I want to go back and look at this closely. McClaren lived until 1910 and was a pastor of Union Chapel in Manchester, England. It was a great leading church during of that day. This was a time of no electronic projection which would require him to have a booming voice. You had your main Anglican Church that wasn't a part of the mainline church of that day. Keep in mind that key ministers during the time of Queen Victoria; the whole

world was getting better and better and England was expanding all over the globe. It was a great time. Yet, there were some issues then.

B. Rise of Christian Activism: Christianity made a sociological jump in Great Britain in the 19th century. This was the rise of Christian Activism. This word activism is part of some of the words they used then. In the century before this, there was a great revival that took place in the 1700's, specifically from 1739 to 1790 in Great Britain that was led by John and Charles Wesley. Even during their day, there were no public schools and so John and Charles Wesley starting the public school system. They were literally kicked out of the established Anglican Church; they then preached in the streets and city squares and you can see historic markers today in where they preached. They led common people to Christ; people who wouldn't necessarily end up in an Anglican Church. They didn't have the clothes to go to an Anglican Church for one thing. Besides schools, they started Orphanages; medical dispensaries and they educated people on how to read. They developed ways to take care of widows and established other types of Christian ministry. These things were always tied to the presentation of the Gospel and in-cooperated into God's church. Good works were never disassociated or cut off from the Gospel. Then by the latter part of the 1700's, they were starting to send missionaries out as were the Anglicans. Actually, the Anglicans had been sending out missionaries long before this time.

C. Definition of Christian Activism: But now in the early 1800's, this thing starts to expand and this business of Christian Activism; in other words, Christians seeking to be involved in the needs and in the issues of the day and time. This was all a very good thing. Are we not as Christians called to be involved in whatever the needs of the day and time are. The whole dynamic of the Wesleys sought to minister to the poor, to the down cast, otherwise to people that others didn't care about. There is nothing wrong with Christian Activism as such. But we are now going to see and also in the coming sessions that there are some issues in regards to who we are in Christ. So, there were organizations and missions and benevolent societies. A lot of people became involved in outreach into the lives of others in England. You can look back in registries in cities such as Bristol. Of the twenty-one such societies registered early in that century, by the end there were a hundred and sixteen registered religious and benevolent institutions. This was during the time of the Salvation Army with Booth which are even today in China. This was one of the great miracles that we have seen in the last decade coming out of the Methodist Church. Their target audiences were working with the poor. All of these institutions were doing good work in the name of Jesus. In that day and time, the high water mark of attendance in Anglian Churches happened in 1859. After this,

attendance started to erode in these churches. There was an invention that came in 1859 that involved activity and movement; this was the bicycle. People started to disassociate from going to church on a regular basis. And today in the States regular attendance is around once a month. This trend started in 1859 with the dominate church in England, but at the same time mission activities increased.

D. Sermon by Alexander McLaren 1901: On Monday, October 7th 1901, McLaren gave the opening address to the autumn assembly of the Baptist Union. The address was a classic sermon which I was able to get. It is a beautiful address and definite worth us looking at. He was in Edinburgh, Scotland at the time and at the beginning of the address, he starts off by talking about a sane and wholesome mysticism. This is not a word that we normally like to use today because of some of the present day movements in the Christian tradition which are not grounded and solid at all. But McLaren was a solid biblical person and his understanding of mysticism includes that which is at the heart of Christianity. He is talking about a certain sense of what he would later define as the direct communion of the human with the divine Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at work in my life; I have a relationship with Jesus and I am following Christ and the Holy Spirit is pointing me toward Christ. He continued to say that we tend to think of Christ for us as the whole of the Gospel. Theologically, in talking about what Christ does for us includes atonement and substitution; it is anything to do with the Cross. This is a free gift to us.

So what did substitution accomplish for us? We are justified which paved the way for the use of the word justification. When we look at what Christ does for us, it really comes under this huge broad heading of justification. This involves the merits of Christ which has accomplished for us what none of us could do. This made possible a relationship back with the Father. But McLaren is pointing at a historical classical Christianity here. He is going to try and make a case giving us a fairly sharp word and critique. He says that we must also take into account the other half of this business of what Christ does in us and what he accomplishes not only for us but in us. Because, what he is saying: this whole business of taking on the character and nature of Christ is paramount. You need both of these in your life, not just one. When we think about what Christ does for us in justification; so what is it that he does in us? This is sanctification. So we have justification, what Christ does for us and we have sanctification, what Christ does in us. This is the work of Christ which is his nature, his love and his goodness literally being poured into our lives, to where we are being conformed to his image. And that which destroys life, which is sin is no longer ruling and reigning in us. Justification breaks the hold of sin in our lives and allows for forgiveness to come and allows

relationships to be restored.

McClaren moves on when he talks about Christ in us. He comes to a climatic point which says that we must all rejoice in manifold activity of the church. He is talking about all of this involvement that he saw throughout English, but this doesn't just include Baptist Churches but also the Anglican Churches. There was a renewal movement happening in the Anglican church as well. He says that none of us would have these diminished but rather would wish that they would increase a hundred fold until an inactive Christian was as much a rarity as people are always a walking contradiction. To be called to Christ is to be called into the body of Christ. This is not a two tiered system where you have the pastors and the ministers doing all the work and the people receiving all the work and doing little. This wasn't an early church model and it isn't a biblical model at all. And regards to the reformation, the reformation isn't finished for we have a long way to go in terms of understanding every member of Christ being a full-fledged full on minister of the Gospel. If you delineate it out where you have ministers and members; this is not a biblical mode of church. There will be some pastors and some that are called and hopefully gifted to specific things. This great old Baptist preacher is now pulling out a double edge sword and it is very sharp.

He says that life is the root of work and more important than work. We will be working on unfolding this in this teaching series. He is calling into question priorities in how we live and how we invest our time and how we walk and move. He is saying that life has to be hierarchical; in other words, there has to be a priority and what he is saying is that sadly our activities for God is not going to be at the top of the hierarchy. This is somewhat counter cultural. It was counter cultural then and also now. So life is the root of work and more important than work; and it is open to doubt that the abundant work of the churches, the local congregations, at present are the outcome of life that comes from God or whether they are not in some cases galvanic movements that stimulate vitality and mass death. He just puts the sword into the very heart of the world view of pastors and leaders in that day and age. When you galvanize something, you shoot an electrical current through it and it doesn't rust or corrode. It takes a lot of energy to do this. So, he is saying that you are generating a lot of energy, you are burning a lot of fuel, pushing a large program but I'm not sure in the long run that this is kingdom work. So, we ask the Lord to give us this kind of holy prophetic courage in this day and age as well. The church still stands in need of reformation so we are asking for the ability to see the world views that are driving us to do the types of ministry and the kind of involvement that we have today. McClaren goes to Luke 10 and says, 'Martha has her own way now;' we will look at this in the next session.

CHAPTER 2. ALEXANDER MCCLAREN'S SERMON

Mysticism can be described as the direct communication of your spirit with the Divine Spirit as taught and illustrated in the New Testament as a fundamental part of Christian belief. Receptivity means that I am open to what the Lord is saying to me through the revelation of his word, the magnificence of his son and the voice of his Spirit which is consistent with the written word. The church was emphasizing what they were doing for God rather than on first listening to what God wants us to be and then acting. Union with our Lord must come before any type of donation or work (kenosis) for our Lord.

A. Sermon by Alexander McClaren 1901 (cont)

1. Both Justification and Sanctification: So McClaren is saying this being a Christian is a 'both/and' business. Just as we want both Justification, accepting the work of Christ in us, repenting of our sins and by faith inviting Christ to rule and reign in our lives. We also want the work of sanctification where the Holy Spirit is recasting our natures into his nature. We want this 'both/and' going on as well as Christian involvement in the world because Christ was involved with the needs of the world. But we also know that the Lord Jesus has a primary relationship with his Father in heaven, his and our God. But how is this balanced? Not just balanced but prioritized. What does it mean then with Martha having her own way? Martha flipped the balance and flipped the priority. In other words, she's got her priorities wrong. McClaren said that the Christian activities of this day, especially, need a deepening consecration of the mystical side of evangelical truth. He is talking about the Word of God in how you and I interact with the written Word and the Living Word, who is Jesus. The river that is to bring fertility to half a continent must rise high on the mountain of God and be fed from the upper spring. Then he gives a word that has helped guide and lead the church all along its two thousand years history.

2. Receptivity: Pay special attention to the word, 'receptivity'. Receptivity is that sense of the Gospel being a gift; the Father's will is made known to us, both through the actions of Christ our Lord and through the miracle of the written Word we have the Father's will. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God to be in us. So these gifts to us are not there to be manipulated or controlled; instead, they have to be received. There is a whole dispositional way of looking here; I am open to what the Lord is saying to me through the revelation of his Word and the magnificence of his Son and through the voice of his Spirit. These are the gifts to us.

3. The Church was Out of Balance: So McClaren was saying that the church was out of balance, in that the stress was thrown more on activity, what we do for God rather than listening first in understanding what God wants us to be. He isn't saying for us not to be involved in mission or ministry. That isn't part of it at all. He is saying that we need to get our balance right. By saying that Martha has it all her own way now; we shot the balance, it is gone. Now we will go to Luke 10:38 and just see what is being said.

B. Luke 10:38

1. Martha Owned her Home: 'Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest.' In this first sentence we see that she owned her home. How many women in the 1st century owned a home? This is somewhat an uncommon event. We do have records of wealthy Roman women owning property, so it isn't unheard of but it doesn't seem to be common. This tells you that her parents were gone and perhaps her husband was gone. We have a single woman living in a man's world in that day and age inviting a group of people, perhaps as many as thirteen people or more. Her sister was obviously a younger sister named Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.

2. Sitting at the Lord's Feet: They are probably in a traditional Jewish home of the time; the men would have gone into an upper room, a living area. Mary is breaking major social rules by being the only female going up with the men. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks. She went to Jesus and asked in a rhetorical question that came out of anger, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' Isn't it amazing that here sits the Lord of the Universe and this lady has enough gumption to give an imperative command to Jesus. I am careful in teaching about Martha because I'm sure she will want to sort me out when I go to heaven. But the Lord answers her now, a firm word, 'Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. There is need of only one thing, Mary has chosen the better part which will not be taken away from her.' Obviously, Martha had a big and loving heart. There is no condemnation for Martha, not at all. I think her love led her to heroic service. Even in today's life having so many people in a home would be quite overwhelming. I have African students who would consider having so many people in the home, not a big problem. I also have central and Latin Americans who would just be used to this sort of thing. At that day and age, it would have been a lot of work as well. There was no electricity, no running water, and no refrigeration. So, there is indeed, a lot of effort involved in preparing a meal for so many people. I think that she was entering into sacrificial service for our

Lord. We should never underestimate that it was for our Lord. She is serving Jesus and that will never be taken away from her.

3. Mary's Place Culturally was with Her Sister: A typical kitchen in that day was outside. The oven was fired by a fire inside of it cooking the bread. They had to grind the meal up and you mix it into a flat patty and plaster it on the inside of the heated wall of the oven. They would have had seasonal vegetables; the meat would probably have been lamb. So, it is going to take a while to put all of this together in this type of a kitchen. Mary, the younger sister's place, sociologically and religiously and culturally in such a stratified culture would place Mary beside her sister, not with the disciples listening to Jesus. This is like somebody who is famous that comes in and everybody abandoned you in the kitchen in order to go sit with the famous person. This is not the best situation at all and then for Mark, a single woman being up sitting at the feet of Jesus and all of the other men. In other words, she broke all of the social and religious rules of the day.

4. Martha was Distracted: Verse 40, 'But Martha was distracted with all the preparations she had to make, so she came up to him and said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work alone? Tell her to help me.' This distraction is a big issue. So, Martha was distracted by her many tasks. None of these were negative tasks as they were in service of Jesus. Here, this lady had to live in two worlds, a woman living in a society in which is not held in the level of esteem though should have been. She is trying to serve Jesus and she is never to be condemned, yet Jesus uses language or rather Luke uses language that indicates that something is wrong. She's got a meal to prepare with preparation and perhaps presentation issues as well. How will she lay all of the things out before them. Other issues that would divide her heart would be the responsibility of it all; she is carrying the load of it all. We will talk more about this word, responsibility, later on. What about appearances? How does this appear; this was important for her. Was she seen as a competent hostess and is there a sense of trying to impress? Just keep in mind the words 'distracted and divided.'

5. Who am I serving, why am I serving: The body language here seems to be that she is trying to accomplish too much. The more important word is 'divided loyalty.' This represents huge issues in Christian service today. Who am I serving and why am I serving and what is my motivation? All of these ideas and points will begin to be considered now as we look further into this. There are some outcomes that always happen with a divided heart. Life inevitably gets overwhelming. I have experienced all of this in my own life with dealing with all of the demands particularly that a local church and specific ministry puts on you. Full time Christian work can be

from early morning to late at night without ever hearing from God, but yet at the same time being very busy for God. Of course we hear this word as you are going to see of anger; an issue that she has.

6. When you have a divided heart, life inevitably gets overwhelming: After saying yes to meaning the needs of Jesus and his disciples, Martha finds herself overwhelmed, she finds herself anxious and angry. For myself, I started working with pastors doing seminars for pastors and teaching pastors many years ago. Even while I was a pastor, I helped lead other pastors as I have dealt with many church leaders.

7. It is Normative to find Church Leaders Overwhelmed with Life: From my own experience, it is fairly normative to find church leaders overwhelmed with life. This has all sorts of consequences. All too often those of us who minister find ourselves overwhelmed with what we said yes to. It is a good thing to say yes to serve Jesus wherever you are: at home, in your church, on the mission field, or as a pastor; there are demands in saying yes to Jesus. And yet, we end up being angry at people around us; this is a huge issue today. Then Martha does the unthinkable; she literally rebukes the Lord. Her question is a rhetorical question; it isn't a true question. In other words, the question was frustration and saying, look! This isn't right! Get her up and get her in the kitchen with me!

8. Message to Us Today: Verse 41: 'But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the best part; it will not be taken away from her.' After she commands that Jesus should tell Mary to help her. I made an appointment at the seminary to sit with both an Old Testament professor and a famous linguist. I had two of my dear friends, one on the right and one of the left. I ask them for their help. In Jesus repeating her name, I ask the Old Testament professor and he gave me a hand motion. In other words, Martha, pay attention; then the linguist said that it was a sign of endearment. Anytime you repeat somebody's name, it means you love them and you care for them. How many times have you not repeated the names in talking to your children and grand-children? You love the children and want to bless them. Jesus is saying to Martha to pay attention; Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. So now we are adding another issue. Not only do you have this issue of divided focus going on but now you have the issue of worry. What is this thing about worry? When you are talking the New Testament language of worry, you are coming into the area of fear. She is afraid that something is going to collapse on her. So, is she actually afraid that the meal is going to fail? It isn't going to be successful and then what? Martha will be seen as a failure. She couldn't pull

it off, she took on too much. She didn't have what it takes to impress, to be the hostess that she wanted to be. So, here is a voice of love and tenderness, a voice of firmness and here is a voice for us today. Jesus didn't reproach the work she was doing, but the fact that Martha allowed this labor to make her so anxious and restless; she could no longer hear the voice of the Spirit within her heart. She had touch with her call to obedient openness. She lost sight of what true service was about and who true service was for. This is so common with us today to have the exact same kind of collapse.

9. Statistics about Longevity: I keep the kind of statistics that I hate, I absolutely hate. It is the kind of statistics regarding longevity of ministering people. It is concerns with how long a person lasts or do you last. I co-ordinate these statistics with other seminaries who keep such things; I co-ordinate them with the pension board of major denominations here in the states. So these statistics are from the United States and not from anywhere else. What we are finding, as high as sixty percent of people come under the was-out rate for those in active ministry and active service for Jesus. The first wave starts in about five years from now and then the title way will come in about fifteen or twenty years. I can't tell you the number of wash-outs or failure within the first five years. Wash-outs include those who quit or those who go into other types of ministry. But the shocker of them is the moral collapse. I worked two years for a denominational organization helping oversea under a thousand pastors and in that time period, we averaged dismissing one pastor per week and most of it was gross moral sin. Another thing that we have found, the statistics run the same for both conservative evangelical people and as well as liberal people. For me, the shocker was to see the biblically orthodox evangelical people wash-out. There is a system's issue going on in the body of Christ. I think the first mental hospital in India in the 1950s called House of Light. It was founded by the Methodist missionary E. Stanly Jones. It was primarily founded for the missionaries who were collapsing from the stress of being on the field. This whole business of Mary and Martha and losing sight of what our service is for and who we are accountable to and who we are listening to. She became outraged because of her divided loyalties and ended up a problem to herself and a distraction for everybody around her. I don't want to end up a casualty in ministry. I don't want the thorns to choke the life out of me. I don't want the evil one to choke the life out of you. Those who are among the thorns hear the word but the cares of the world, all of the anxieties of the world come in and choke the Word and it ends up yielding nothing. Martha, Jesus says; I don't want my name being pronounced in any other way except in love and response before Christ. Martha, it is all a matter of priorities in the work of the Lord.

10. There is Only Need of One Thing: Verse 42, 'But one thing is needed. Mary has

chosen the best part; it will not be taken away from her.’ This is going to be a foundational work that is going to carry us through everything else we talk about. We must realize that union with Christ precedes everything. Another way we can say this, is that union with our Lord must come before any type of donation or work or *kenosis*, the famous Pauline Philippian phrase of self-emptying love for our Lord. Why do we love? Because he first loved us; that is the first priority as from John 4:19, our work is grounded in his love for us. Our first commitment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all of our mind and strength. This means spending quality relational time with Jesus on a daily basis. That is the foundation of who we are. That is where we received all that we are. If you are in a small group or with your wife or husband or your staff; the real question is where are you in this story? Who do you identify with in this story?

CHAPTER 3. RED FLAGS IN YOUR MINISTRY

Which do you love more, the Lord or the projects you are doing for him? Is your goal to exalt the Lord or build a personal kingdom? Essence of anxiety is whether or not you can trust God. The question to ask when you begin having feelings of self-pity is, “Is your life going to be defined by how you think it ought to go?” The blame-shame mindset is that you are unhappy because there is something wrong with the people around you. When you experience these red flags in your ministry, you should recognize it as time that it’s possible that the Lord may be prompting you to make a change in your life. The Mary in you must rest at the feet of Jesus if the Martha in you is to do her work.

A. Example of Red Flags

I want to talk about red flags in minister. I need to understand that when I see this red flag, it is warning us of something and we experience this warning in minister. This may be a call from the Holy Spirit for me to step back and find out what the Lord is trying to say to us. Could there be a better way? Okay, so what did Martha fear? She perhaps feared that her project would fail. In this, we need to let the Holy Spirit press us into considering what the Holy Spirit is saying in regards to understanding love. Do I love the work I am doing or the ministry that I am doing? Do I do the project that I do for our Lord or do I love him more? It is kind of a pressing question for us today in terms of what is really driving my life. So she is afraid that something is going to collapse, even in the midst of her good work for the Lord. If you dig beneath the story, you will certainly get a sense that she is also afraid of not measuring up. She will not be seen as worthy; others will not see her as worthy or perhaps worth, others will not see her as being confident. You see this in Asian based

cultures. You see drive, drive, and drive in order to excel and prove your worthiness. There is an interesting term that the Singaporeans use a lot. I think that it is a Chinese Mandarin term, *keyasue*; the idea is that there is not enough to go around; not enough resources to go around. So you have to drive harder than others around you. You have to work and work. So Martha had some sense that she wouldn't make an impression upon Jesus. This raises a red flag in itself; who is this ministry really about? Has she entered into this ministry for our Lord in order to promote herself, to be in good standing before Christ? This is a huge issue for us today and there is this word, 'object pole.' What is the object pole for your work? What is the work centered on? Is our work centered on exalting our Lord? Or is our work focused on building a personal kingdom?

This business of building a personal kingdom can be cloaked under the garb of mercy. In other words, you can cloak all of this as being Christian all done in the name of Christ, yet at the very heart and center of this world view is pride and ego. We will come back to some of these points in the course so please keep them in mind. In some of the crises of ministry, is the Lord allowing things to collapse, allowing things to come undone in order to get us out of this self-centered egotistic way of life that is only interested in what I gain or what I am able to build for myself?

Another red flag that we need to look at is agitation. There is also anger and clearly any anxiety is connected to something specifically. For instance when I drove out in the rain yesterday from the Portland Airport on roads that I hadn't driven on before, there was some concern over this. Anxiety is very broad; it is a looming sense that life may not be good after all; that I really need to be concerned about everything. The bottom line of anxiety is considering whether God is good, life is good and can I trust the movement of God in my life? Not only do you have this broad sense of nervousness about life but a specific fear and for Martha, this could be the fear that her meal would not work out.

There are other issues in this event that were important. When you start unfolding her own self-perception of what she was experiencing. This is especially so when you see her question, 'Lord, do you not care?' Now, in my audience here I want to ask what is she saying and experiencing in her own life? She is experiencing disappointment in others and this includes Jesus. What else is going on? Think about what else is happening in her own life? That is correct; it is self-pity. She is not only disappointed but she is experiencing self-pity. The minute you start feeling sorry for yourself is the minute that there is an open door that wraps life around with what you experience, whether it is going as you think it should go. This is a red flag; is my life going to be defined by how I think it ought to go. When I'm disappointed, what is that saying? Do we think that God isn't arranging

things the way he really ought to be arranging them? So, who is at the center of the world when this happens? We think that we are at the center of the world when this happens. So, self-pity is normally a fairly serious lapse for us that allow all sorts of darkness to come in.

She also entered into the blame-shame game. This makes an equation in life. This is an equation that will kill a relationship, it will kill a marriage. It will kill a ministry. It is very common to hear pastors talk about how great their situation would be if they just didn't have to deal with people. Of course, it doesn't work that way or if we didn't have certain sets of people; sometimes, there is truth in this but I'm not sure we will have time to look into this. So what is the equation? I'm not happy equals what? There is something wrong with you. I'm not happy equals something being wrong with the people around me. Do you see why this is such a devastating equation. That is saying that I am the center of all that it is and I expect everyone else to come in place around me. We were driving to Nashville, Tennessee one time with my two grandchildren and one of my daughters; the grandchildren were out of control and I told them to behave. Afterwards, I heard one of the grandkids say, this is granddad's world and we just have to live in it! The people in our world, including the people we serve are not orbiting spheres of self-servitude, spinning around us who are there to make our lives happen. That is not a Christian world view. I realize that I am guilty of all of these.

So, there is this whole business for Martha of controlling others. Control becomes a huge factor; it is a huge red factor in terms of a disintegrating setting where self is being exalted, that is self-understanding and self-will is taking priority over everything else. Was she trying to make up for a self-perceived deficit? Did she have a sense that she just didn't measure up? Measuring up is a bit of an American idiom; better wording would include not being self-complete or not having everything she needed to be confident in herself. She felt that she had to resort to these types of behavior in order to make up some type of deficit in my life. This is what's going on when Jesus speaks with love to her and speaks a gracious word to her.

II. Summary

So, to sum this up, the Mary in us has to rest at the feet of Jesus if the Martha in us is to do her work.

CHAPTER 4. ESSENCE AND RECEPTION

Essence is who the Lord has created you to be. Biblically, essence precedes existence as oppose to Sartre's teaching that man is no more than what he makes of himself. God has given us the capacity of reception, to be able to hear God's voice and follow it. The spiritual life that God calls you to live is based on what you receive from God, not on what you do for God.

I. Essence

We have talked about the Wesleyan Revival in the 1700s and about Christian Activism in the 1800s and how that set a mode of living and working that permeated broad sections of the church today. I want to try and give a further foundation to a certain important term. The church had a term which you will see come up conceptually in any number of places in the early church. There were people like John Cash, an early church father writing in the late 300s and early 400s. Where you really see it come into flower and explained thoroughly is in the theologian times of the medieval age, a person the church referred to as the dumb ox. This person was a very overweight person, yet a beloved man of God by the name of Thomas Aquinas. He had this word which was nothing really original to him; it is the idea of essence. It had to do with who the Lord created us to be. We will spend a lot of time discussing the image of God from Genesis, along with how we are being formed into the image of God in Pauline thought. So essence is who God created me to be. What they would write is that essence precedes existence. There is a lot of theology behind that this course doesn't have time to unpack. From a Christian standpoint, we believe that the Lord holds every single person in his mind and heart, even before they were born. This is why we cherish human life and why we stand so firmly that nothing is a mistake or accident regardless of the circumstance of birth, regardless whether they know their parents. You now have people saying to their children that they were unwanted. I have students who have been rejected by their parents. Some don't even know their birth parents. In regards to the doctrine of essence, the church fathers affirmed that we are held as cherished because I am created by God the Father, almighty. My deepest dignity is in God's work in my life, not in what I do to create my own identity. This doesn't take away from the responsibility that we have. This is important to understand in terms of being driven that many of us find in terms of the rise of Christian activism. It is also important in terms of getting the balance not only in terms of what Jesus does for us but what Jesus does within us.

II. What's the Result if My Life is Defined by What I Do?

A. Jean-Paul Sartre: So when we talk about essence preceding existence, let's move forward in terms of where things end up eventually; as to my life being defined by what I do. If my life is defined by what I accomplish or what I build or by what I accumulate or by whom I influence. These are all prime things in ministry. My wife and I have built buildings in ministry and accumulated things for ministry. If I get to the point of saying okay, the value of my life rises or falls on what I build or the influence or metrics that I measure myself by. It is very common in congregations to measure yourself by the number of baptisms or by the sheer attendance. There are many different ways in which we measure ourselves. If these statistics become my primary means of self-worth, then I am on really slippery slope in my life. Let's look at where that slippery slope goes as we go into the 1900s. I want to look at a school of thought that was highlighted by a person named Jean-Paul Sartre. The book which I'm reading from is on existentialism and human emotion. Please keep in mind that Sartre was an atheist. He was an existential humanist, who said that there was no God and that the philosophical atheism discarded the idea of God. Well, people have discarded the idea of God for a long time. But, anyway, this gained a lot momentum in the 1800s, but not so much for the notion that essence precedes existence. To a certain extent, this idea is found everywhere. We find it in Voltaire and in Kant, both notable philosophers of the day. Man has a human nature and this nature is found in all people. This means that everybody is a particular example of a universal concept. Kant says that the result of this universality is that the natural person as well as the famous and rich person are circumscribed by the same definition and have the same basic qualities.

Atheistic existentialism, which Sartre represented, is more coherent. It states that if God does not exist, this is his presupposition, there is not God. Many people in church today don't believe in God; they only believe in their own social agenda and not at all willing to submit anything to the Lordship of Christ. However, they do everything under the banner of the church. So, it states, if God doesn't exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence. He is flipping it; a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept and that this being is us. So, what is he saying? This existence is what defines me, what I do defines me. So what is it that is meant by saying that existence precedes essence?

B. Thomas Aquinas: The church, since the time of Thomas Aquinas, says that my essence is what God created me to be. But the atheists say no, that is nonsense; I define my essence. I define

who I am. Is this not the cry that we universally hear today? Not only do I define my essence, even today, we will see that we are now trying to define our gender! People have now started to define everything about themselves. It is all about self-definition. There is no given here as such. So, that which is meant by saying that existence precedes essence; first of all we exist and then only afterwards we define ourselves. You have to be a self-made person which is what defines ourselves and thus there is no human nature sense there is no God to conceive it. A person is nothing else but what they make of themselves. That is what a number of philosophers then and now. Humanity if nothing else but what we make of ourselves.

Let me suggest that kind of bent understanding has permeated Christian thought or more so permeated Christian action. It works itself out in all of those negative things we have been talking about. So, what is missing today in the church is a gap of understand just what the church is. We also have a gap of no anthropology; we don't understand how the Lord made us and what he created us for and understanding of receiving the good gifts of God before entering into any kind of *kenosis* or self-living out of this. The same person who codified it for the church; Thomas Aquinas said that the soul seeks to give form to the body. In other words, God has created me in his image. I am an incarnated soul; I am made in the image and likeness of God. I am destined to be with God in eternity. Christ through his sacrifice has made that destiny possible for me through the interactions of the merits of Christ and the Holy Spirit within my life; I can now allow the Holy Spirit to lead all that I am to redeem me. This is what the new birth does; it restores the image of God within me. I don't have to live by those red flag issues that I've pointed out earlier. I realize here that I am a child of the King.

C. Ministry Can Be a Shortcut to Hell: I have worth that cannot be measured because I am a child of the King. The Lord fills his purpose for us which may not be tied up in all the activity that I tend to think that will fulfill us. We need to hear a tough word from ancient authors and that is, 'ministry can actually be a shortcut to Hell.' If you don't get some of this stuff grounded in your life about who you are doing this for, why you are doing it and who gets the honor and who is directing it all, it can be a shortcut to hell by entrapping me in layer upon layer of things that will undo my life. It will also bring harm into God's kingdom.

D. John Ortberg: I want to put up a little schema here that comes from John Ortberg, a sweet man of God in the western part of the United States. He addresses these issues straight on, writing a recent text called 'soul keeping, caring for the most important part of you.' He gives us a good example and schema for the difference between letting Martha have it all her own way and

being grounded in Christ in midst of the heavy demands of ministry. At no point have I ever thought that ministry did not press me at times and make very real requirements of me. I never try to get away from that at all. But what Ortberg points out, there is a difference between falling into the trap of which states that work determines everything. I am my work, in other words. You are not your work. Your work is an extension of your relationship with Jesus. When you get this out of balance, life begins to collapse. I am not my work. The definition of my life is not my work. When Martha has it all her own way, according to Ortberg and he isn't even using the Mary/Martha outline here. He is talking about the same concept. Then, I end up hurried and when you are hurried, you are always pre-occupied and unable to be fully present. By that, anytime you are with someone or involved in doing work for the Lord, you are worried and anxious about what is next or what still needs to be done. You can't be full present or fully relaxed in the moment to what the Holy Spirit is trying to do in that ministry moment. As a pastor having back to back services; three back to back services. Sometimes I felt that I needed a whip for the other staff and for myself. This hurried feeling became an inner condition of the soul, writes Ortberg; and it becomes so dangerous. And when this takes over, the same thing that happened with Martha will happen with us. It becomes spiritually draining. The spiritual presence of God gets drained and then what happens, you do ministry just to do it. It becomes rote as your heart is no longer in it. There is no longer anything there.

And then ultimately Ortberg writes: it causes me to be unavailable to God. He compares this; he admits there are times when we are busy, but there are times when we have to be un-busy. Ortberg continues to say, I really can maintain a full schedule. There can be a lot of comings and goings; I can have in that sense many activities. But he makes a distinction that this is an outward condition and opposed to an inner condition of the soul. But all of this reminds me that I continually need God. Whereas I'm unavailable to God here, the schedule itself drives me and pushes me to this very sense of needing to be with the Lord.

E. Reception: A quick point that I want to make here; reception is the greatest capacity God has given us. When he made you as a living person in his image, part of that capacity that he has given each one of us is the ability for you to hear his own voice and to follow it. Reception is the greatest capacity he has given to you. The idea of essence, to be made in the image of God means that I can hear and I can respond. I have the capacity to listen and accept his word, his ongoing invitation to me and I can respond. I can be responsible with what he is asking of me. The spiritual life that we are called to live, is based on what we receive from God, not on what we do for God. I

don't want to be accused of being a dualist here. I want to explain this; the spiritual life that is sound and solid is based on what I receive from God. If you flip it and base your spiritual life on what you do for God, then all of the issues that we have been trying to cover began to collapse. You will not be able to do enough to earn God's favor. Paul had a lot to say about this. Are you able to fulfill the Law? No way! It isn't going to happen. Are you going to work your way to heaven? No, it doesn't happen that way. It is a gift; I am here because of a gift of God. I am a gift of God and you are a gift of God. You are a redeemed gift of God. Reception is the priority given to us by the Lord himself. There were times with the Lord that the disciples didn't even have time to eat. He would pull away and go up into Mount Herman just to get away from the pressing crowd. We are not talking about an unrealistic understanding of life. There will be heavy times of demands, but it is through all of this; in putting this priority that the Lord has given us that we sudden realize with Saint Augustine in his famous Easter sermon, you are what you receive. Blessed be the name of the Lord for allowing us to be what we receive from him. Amen.

CHAPTER 5. QUESTIONS ABOUT EVALUATING YOUR MOTIVES

Mysticism can be described as the direct communication of your spirit with the Divine Spirit as taught and illustrated in the New Testament as a fundamental part of Christian belief. Receptivity means that I am open to what the Lord is saying to me through the revelation of his word, the magnificence of his son and the voice of his Spirit which is consistent with the written word. The church was emphasizing what they were doing for God rather than on first listening to what God wants us to be and then acting. Union with our Lord must come before any type of donation or work (kenosis) for our Lord.

A. How Do You Monitor Your Motives? We really need time to integrate what we have heard; sometimes it is good to question what we have heard. We need to ask whether or not it is really the Gospel or not. Anything a prophet says is subject to who or what of the other prophets. Does anyone have the whole truth of God in their life? Well, God gives us Jesus and his truth. Anyway, questions help us integrate the information that we have.

How can we distinguish between building a kingdom for the Lord and building a kingdom for ourselves? I think that as an individual, I am not fully capable of seeing it. I think the more gifts and grace that God has given me the more capable I am of self-deception. I am speaking out of my own personal life here; none of this is theoretical. I think the only way we can avoid self-deception is

through the community that we live in and are a part of. If I am married I would also refer to my wife or spouse to know what they think. Moreover, Christianity is not me but instead it is we; Christianity is in the plural, not in the singular. There are some things that can be accomplished being a single person. No one can accept the goodness of God's kingdom for me; I have to accept that myself. When you look at Jean-Paul Sartre, this leads to individualism and egoism; it is whatever feels right and whatever feels good for you. The early church talked about the eight deadly sins and the beginning of holiness is the realization of all the eight deadly sins reside in my life. The worst of the worst are vain glory followed by pride. Vain glory is thinking in terms of how good you are, taking the credit instead of giving it to God. The only way I know to do that is to submit myself to a small group of people who I allow to speak into my life. In some circles, it is called a 360 review which is really difficult. You allow those over you and those under you and beside you to speak truth into your lives. What we know from the early churches, the deeper you get into Christ, the more subtle deceptions you have. I have to have the body of Christ in my life.

B. What do You Mean by, 'The Merits of Christ?' You are using the phrase, 'the merits of Christ.' I know you don't mean it in the Roman Catholic sense and so how do you mean it? When I talk about the merits of Christ in a classical understanding, it is what was accomplished for humanity on the Cross. We are talking about the atonement, the fact that Jesus died in my place. He defeated evil and took the punishment. Was God joking when he said that if you should not eat of the fruit, you will die? It is what Jesus did for me, a onetime historic act and we need to avoid thinking that this was some kind of a heroic martyr's debt, something that inspired us, which is not a Christian view. We are not talking about a heroic martyr, but instead the God of the universe dying on the cross, a onetime historic event that covered the sin of the world. Does that mean that every person personally receives that? No, it doesn't, but every person who responds, bending the knee and following Christ.

C. How do You Respond When you see Red Flags? If we see any of the red flags in ourselves, the course will help us to know how to deal some of those. But just briefly, it is easy to identify those red flags in other people and especially in leaders. I don't know if it is true but it seems like the more fame they get, it seems like it is even easier to see it. Do you have any thoughts on how to react to people who are in our leadership circles that I personally have to talk to or answer to?

This is a two point question and I need to know whether I understand it or not. Basically, what I do when I identify those in my own life and what I do when I identify those in other's lives.

For the second question, in 1st John 5:14, this is the boldness we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us and if we know that he hears us and in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the request made of him. In verse 16, if you see your brother committed what is not a mortal sin, you will ask and God will give life to such a one. This is where I have such an issue at times; the Lord created us to have sense of right and wrong. That is part of the work he has done for all humanity. So, when we see a wrong or injustice, we are naturally indignant. Sometimes we are called to stand against that which is wrong and it is right and good to stand against that which is wrong. I think the greater issue is who do I have a right to get mad at? If you take the wisdom of the early church for they say that there is only one person in the world you have a right to be angry with and that is yourself. Oswald Chambers says that you want the mind of Christ and he is trying to put life into that person. So the call for me is to ask what I see in the life of others. Do I just see what is wrong or am I trying to have the mind of Christ? You want the mind of Christ to pray life into your spouse and goodness into your children and to pray for your pastor. I'm checking those red flags because I don't want to be known as a person who is always against, always irritated and angry with somebody else. This is making life miserable for yourself and everybody around you. The Holy Spirit brings these things up and you can deny them and thus you give Satan a foothold in your life.

D. Wanting Affirmation in Ministry: Just this last week, I met with a group of pastors and what you are talking about came up. This touched my heart then and also now. When we go up to preach and prepare, at one level, you don't want to look like an idiot and at another level, you want people to like you; you did a great job. At one level, you want God to legitimately be glorified in the process. I'm assuming that tension because I don't know which is taking over sometimes. I don't have the ability to do so. I am assuming that tension is something we can live with and that God is in the sanctification process and can reveal what he wants. Is that accurate thinking, otherwise I don't even know how we function.

I like your language of tension because you are admitting that there could be some impure stuff. All of us have to come to admit: am I going to collapse in being an anxious people pleaser? That term comes from the famous Neil Freudian psychotherapist by the name of Horney, a German psychotherapist. It is called the neurosis of our time. Am I going to be an anxious people pleaser? This is how it would work for me; I could literally have a hundred people walk out on Sunday morning and say, 'good sermon preacher' and a hundred people would tell me how something specifically spoke to them or how there was a transformational moment. And then one old blessed

soul would come out and tell you how bad it was. It happens with anybody in an upfront ministry. It is even worse if you are a music person. I would find myself focusing the whole week on that one person and then I would go through all the red flags. I am called to present the Word as faithfully as I can and he knows that I am a cracked pot. The vessel is cracked. Being a potter, I love to do pottery. So, my vessel is cracked, it leaks and I have to have continual accountability. It is his word and I trust the power of that; I just pray for freedom for those I am training that you will not be lead down the path of being a people pleaser. I am not here to please anyone; I am here to please God. Does God love us enough to have people oppose us? It is just part of ministry today. You are not going to go anywhere without having opposition.

You are doing your best to check whether you are doing any kind of people pleasing. You are not there to build your own kingdom; you are being faithful and in that I will say to rest in the Lord. He is going to work it out.

E. What do You do When People's Expectations don't Match what God is Calling you to do? I know that we are called to serve people and to serve the Lord with ministry being the idea of serving people in the process of it. People see us as serving them and there is a tension between serving the Lord and serving people between being a people pleaser and just trying to do your job. People have a lot of expectations on what that job is. I am wondering about the consumer culture that we live in. I know what some of the answers are but how do we resist this, that constant pressure to do your job.

You have to let Lazarus die. Once again, Mary and Martha, what? You stayed three days longer! He is dead! We are going to do a whole thing on expectation and anticipation. Expectations kill us. So the expectation is that I have hired you, I am paying you to do a job and basically it works itself out to saying, you are okay if you are there when I need you and how I need you on my own terms. In other words, omni-available, and my word is that you have to let Lazarus die. This has been a wonderful session and I pray that the Lord will guard his Word even through my very fallible ways.

CHAPTER 6. RECEPTION, RESPONSE AND BALANCE

God wants us to be faithful to the kingdom and his son and fruitful according to his metrics. What's the goal and what condition do our hearts need to be in to understand the goal? The Mary in us needs to rest at the feet of Jesus in order for the Martha in us to do her work. Think about when you experienced renewal and think about when you were blessed. When you have received God's blessing, how has that resulted in demonstrating his hand of mercy to someone else? How are your activities balanced?

A. What Does it Mean to Sit at the Feet of Jesus and Work for his Kingdom? Our course will consist of peeling layer after layer away and looking at the information at different angles, always asking the Lord to help with it and to seek his guidance and to know that he wants us to be faithful to his kingdom in following Jesus. I think he also wants us to be fruitful, not in the sense of massive metrics but understanding what are the metrics. What does the Lord want us to do in pastoral ministry and any kind of ministry for him? What is the goal and what is the condition of our hearts that need to be in place for us to understand his goals for our lives. I want us to continue in the idea that the Mary in us has to rest at the feet of Jesus, if the Martha in us is to do the work. So, it is a both/and; it isn't just Martha's world of activism and it isn't just Mary's world of just sitting at his feet. It is a both/and, but I am trusting that you can see the hierarchy in it. I am always a little hesitant when the church starts talking about hierarchy, personally having to live under such a hierarchy. Yet, our hierarchy is the Lord Jesus and his word for us. We are getting a real sense of how he wants us to order our world. I want you to see this and feel it. We are going to draw some of it out. So, what does it mean to both sit and to stand and to work in his kingdom?

B. Reception: I want you to enter into some self-reflection here, thinking about whether your last week was a normal week. If you can imagine how the Lord created you in who you deeply are, think about your greatest dignity and the fact that you were loved before the beginning of time. Think about how God created you in terms of reception and in terms of being revived. What did the Lord use to revive you? Try to be open and as specific as possible. What was it that brought a sense of renewal to you in that week? Then think about where you were blessed; where you experienced a little joy in your life. For me, it is refreshing in the sense of having clear air when in this kind of climate. I have been able to interact with other saints in Christ and all of this is a blessing. There can be ten thousand blessings in ten thousand ways throughout the day. We can think back to one of the great spiritual writers who would talk about the activity of God being everywhere and always

present. But it is only open to the eyes of those who have the faith to see it. So, grace is always present. What did the Lord use to speak his grace into your life this last week? Think about ways in which you felt cared for and nurtured in the faith. One of the great joys I have now; even when I invest in students, I will have any number of those students who will grow into maturity in Christ and I will receive some of their ministry from them. Suddenly the person, who mentored is now being mentored and the one who taught and led is now be taught and led. I have had an instance like that take place. More specifically, how and where did God speak to you? Where did he bless you this last week? In regards to reception, what is it that the Lord used or what were the circumstances that the Lord brought about for you to have an influx of his love and grace in your life? It is important to look at things like this so that you can begin to see whether Mary is dominating or Martha is dominating or whether there is any Mary at all or whether Martha has it all her own way or in some cases, where there is too much of resting and reception without actually donating.

C. Response: So we have the receiving side of the human heart but we also have the responding or responsible side of the human heart. The Lord gives me the possibility of saying yes to his directives, those that come from the word and the possibility of implementing what he wants me to do. Often, this takes a great amount of courage, but the capacity is there for us to receive God's good blessings and to be his hand of mercy for others to put into play what we receive. One instance in my own pastoral ministry, we found ourselves a little tight financially in the local church. I found myself very frustrated with the way in which the way funds were being raised in that local church. It was mainly through doing a pledge in the autumn and then counting on people living up to their pledge. At that point, I heard teaching from John Maxwell and then thought that we should do away with this whole idea of a pledge and start pressing the people to tithe on their income and trust God. I took it to those who help me govern the church where some were really against it. I thought why somebody who was robbing God of his tithes and offerings, why should they be allowed to govern the church. But I heard the word to be courageous and go ahead and press the people of God that everything belonged to the Lord. In my setting, a pledge campaign seemed to promote a lack of faith. Just press the biblical standards of giving as it all belongs to the Lord. As a starting point, we give ten percent back to the Lord. So, that was a way in which I could hear from the Lord and hear from others as most of the leadership said yes, let's do this. We wanted to trust and be bold here. This was another way of trying to change the culture and it was done by hearing first and then by moving forward. Now, think about ways in which you are donating the energy that the Lord gives you; about specific ways in which you are giving back.

So, go over your normal week. This might take a while. List out all of your roles, functions and tasks; all the things you did in this past week. When I was in pastoral ministry, I required those who worked for me to keep a log of how many pastoral contacts they made every week and how many phone calls, how many committee meetings, and how many hospital visits, everything. I didn't do this to see if they were doing their job but to allow them to see how much they were over functioning in their jobs. It was to get them to see that it was a record before the Lord. In this, you could see that you are doing too much. So for this list write out what you have done for the Lord this past week? This is a positive thing now; I don't want to be negative in my illustration but how are you giving yourself to help others and to seek to mold others into the image of Christ? How are you pouring love into whatever you do, from typing an e-mail or texting someone? Anytime that you are writing articles or doing anything; you should be aware that anything that you do takes energy from you. You should List out these things side by side, having the things that come under reception on one side of the page and then anything that involves a response on the other side of the page.

D. Balance: After doing this, consider how these things are balancing out. I grew up in a part of the world called West Texas, a place of farming and ranching. It was a semi-arid rather desolate place, but it has its own beauty. I loved it and was thankful for it and would not trade it for anything. One of the things you had to do in West Texas in terms of farming was contour farming. This meant that any slopes in the land needed contours plowed into it so that when the occasional rain came, it wouldn't wash it all out and create gullies or wash off the top soil. So, in pastoral ministry or any Christian ministry, it can readily devolve quickly in terms of the nutrients in your life being easily washed away by over exertion. This is by doing more than what the Lord is asking you to do and failing to balance this whole business of reception in place. If your notes come back where you are giving and doing in terms of energy and on the reception side, there is only a small amount happening. I can guarantee that sooner or later, you are only going to only want one thing from the church and that is to get out of it. It could be that you have more on the reception side than on the giving side. Hopefully, you will also see that sometimes you will have an activity that will show up on both sides. For example, visiting someone in the hospital and it ends up being a blessing to you. So, you end up receiving more than you ever give. But isn't that a part of ministry, that you receive so much more than what you give. This isn't something to be stressed out about unless this side is severely crippled and unless this is set into a disposition where you put yourself in a way of living and manner of being in which the doing side just totally outweigh any kind of reception. We will look at this further.

CHAPTER 7. RESERVOIR VS CANAL

A canal simultaneously pours out what it receives. A reservoir waits till it is filled then discharges water without loss to itself. Today, there are many in God's church that acts like canals. The reservoirs are far too rare. So urgent is the charity of those through whom heavenly doctrine flows that they want to pour it forth to us before they have been filled. They are more ready to speak than to listen, impatient to teach what they have not grasped, and full of presumption to govern others while they know not how to govern themselves. High mountain lakes have one stream out and water level relatively constant throughout the year. How is the water level staying constant in your life? Depletion results in erosion of presence, and results in just going through the motions.

A. Example of High Mountain Lakes

One of the greatest sermons I have ever read is sermon eighteen from Bernard's Commentary on the Song of Songs. Bernard was actually quite a controversial person then and now. The person who is wise therefore will see his or her life is more like a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives but the reservoir retains the water until it is full and then charges the overflow without loss to itself.

Bernard continued in saying that they know that there is a curse on the person who allows their own property to degenerate and if you think my opinion worthless then listen to someone who is wiser than me. The fool sits on and comes out with all these feelings at once, but the wise man subdues it and restrains them. Bernard was writing nearly a thousand years ago. Yet, what he is writing is just as relevant now as it ever was. Today, there are many in God's church who act like canals, the reservoirs are far too rare. So urgent is the charity of those through whom the streams of heavenly doctrine flow to us, if they want to pour it forth before they have been filled. They are more ready to speak than to listen and patient to teach what they have not grasped and full of presumption to govern others while they know now how to govern themselves. May the Lord have mercy on us! Let's talk about this idea of this reservoir that is mentioned. We will see yet another image that will help us to get a hold on this major construct of reception preceding donation or receiving love for our Lord before kenotic self-giving or *kenosis*. That is this whole business of a reservoir that Bernard talked about.

One such phenomena that I have seen wherever I have gone mountain climbing, mostly in the Rocky Mountain range of America specifically in New Mexico and Colorado. I have also seen

this phenomenon in the Himalayan Mountains in India and anywhere that I have done any kind of mountain climbing. I hope to draw a very poor facsimile of a high mountain lake. An artist, I am not! You will need to bear with me. I am talking about a natural high mountain lake where you might see three or four streams flowing into it. There will be a fairly good size amount of water. You might also see literally dozens of small brooks, small fingers of water feeding into the lakes from many different places. Here is the one phenomenon that I have never seen an exception to though I am assured there are exceptions as my own view is so limited. These high mountain lakes always flow out with a single stream. In addition, the level of the water always stays relatively normal the year around in these high mountain crater lakes. You might only see a three or four foot difference between the low water mark which usually comes at the end of September in North America or beginning of October. Then it starts to snow again and the lakes will start to rise again. But throughout the year in these natural high mountain lakes, the water level stays pretty much the same. The issue here is that there is a primary outflow. We can compare this to a vocation or a calling. This is the primary calling of the Lord and the vocation is how I seek to live that out in ministry or in whatever form. We really need to reclaim the fact that being a Christian teacher, mechanic, doctor or whatever; this is one hundred percent ministry. We want people to understand that they are full time ministers of the Gospel called to apply it in every area in which they work.

B. Depletion of Presence:

It is this water level and its' depth, and how that is staying constant. That is the issue; how is that staying constant in your life? Negatively, when the water level starts to go down, it is then called depletion. Depletion, if left unchecked, will result in a complete erosion of presence where anything alive will stop growing in the soil as there is no soil left. There is nothing to give. Depletion will give way to merely going through the motions which at times we have to do, particularly in times of emergency and danger. However, when the majority of life becomes merely going through the motion, then it is going to devolve where there is no water left and therefore there is nothing to give. Then you are truly talking about a full blown crisis where you just can't do it anymore. It is somewhat common to hear leaders, particularly ministry leaders who will tell others not to be surprised if you don't find me here next year or whenever. That is a common thing to hear. This is called depletion of presence which leads to erosion which then becomes a crisis. It is then that you have to have some kind of intervention or things will end up in a very bad way. The question then becomes what the Lord wants you to be in terms of these streams of mercy that are flowing into

your life, and can you articulate these streams of mercy? What does the Lord use to infuse your heart and your life and your family with his goodness?

C. What are the streams of mercy in your life?

1. Examples: What would you say the number one thing that the Lord uses to infuse his grace and love into your life? For some the Word is the number one thing that infuses God's grace and love into their lives. Clearly, this has to be a big stream. For others, it is when they see fruitfulness that comes from faithful ministry. To me, this is the ministry of encouragement and conformation; that God is at work. There is the sense of conformation from the fruit that the Lord is growing in and through our cooperative efforts. Clearly, one of the big streams has got to be prayer, the communion with God where I listen and share and receive. Also there is seeing the activity of God at place; showing us that this is real. We see God's providential care through history and through our own lives. What all of us need to do is say okay, this and this needs to be in place in my life before the goodness of God can flow at a steady level in and through my life. All of this infusing means that his grace needs to be extenuated and given priority in terms of these streams of mercy so that I can live in vocational fidelity which will always work and at some point will be rejoicing in the fruit that God grows and very grateful to be a part of his ongoing kingdom and life.

2. The means of grace by John Wesley: You want to get the classic means of grace and understand that there are things that bring goodness into our lives. It could be sewing or cooking which by the way, my wife does and I'm very grateful for that. It could be working with your hands or being out in nature. The Lord has created you and you are a unique person. He has given you very distinct ways in which he fills you with his goodness. The point is; are you allowing that goodness to come about? In one of John Wesley's sermon, he wrote on a major theological category called the means of grace. He was referring to all these streams the Lord uses to bring his love and his grace into our lives. He says, by means of grace I understand as outward signs, words or actions ordained of God and appointed for this end to be the ordinary channels whereby God might convey to us: preventing, justifying and sanctifying grace. Now, preventing grace that draws us to the Lord; this is the magnetism of God's love. This magnetism is the way he uses to draw us to him and prevent us from going eschew that we don't come back. This means that he has instituted things that Jesus gave us; these are his examples, both private and public prayer where a person is praying one on one with the Lord or praying with a group of people. If you go into Wesley's chapel in London today and the flat that he lived in is still there and restored. You will see a tiny room which was added onto this five story flat. It wasn't much bigger than a closet. There was a place to kneel

where Wesley knelt down to pray. He got up at four in the morning to pray. He had the Scriptures along beside him. The early Methodists called the room the power house of Methodism. They attributed that room to the revival that swept England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland in the 1700s. So we see clearly that the Lord wants us to be in a posture where we are listening to him and praying. He would spend an hour a day doing that. And then searching the Scriptures, reading and hearing and mediating on the Word; this was a big stream coming in. It is allowing this word to be infused into my life. I am not trying to be a master of it but I am trying to let it be a master of me.

We certainly want to do everything we can to enhance our study and our knowledge of this word. We ultimately want it to tame us in order to transform our own lives. So we have the Word and we have prayer and we also have the Lord's Supper. He was insistent that this took place on a regular basis. The Lord instituted this himself the night before he died. This is part of what we have been given. Jesus added fasting. Wesley fasted in the historic model of the church which was to fast on Fridays. You would fast from Thursday evening to 3 p.m. on Friday afternoon. Why 3 p.m.? That is when Jesus died. It also happened to be English high tea time as well. Now by Christian conference, this is where I meet together with others and no longer doing a solo leadership in ministry. Solo leadership usually ends putting us in a ditch. Christian conferencing is following the example of Christ. He taught the masses, but trained and disciple the few. He put those few in a community and they did life together and that is what we are called to do. There are works of mercy, doing good to the body and soul. And doing good to the household of faith, Christians. So, we are called to invest our lives in some way with those who need the Gospel and be very intentional about that. This is balancing the means of grace in your life. I came across a person who had never fasted in his life and so he decides to do this and goes into a five day fast. He finds himself down in an abandoned coal mine in Western Pennsylvania and he collapses. So, any time we teach on fasting, we need to qualify and help people to understand what we are talking about. I am living life with others which is intentional and not casual. You see in Christian renewal movements, this is always part of the renewal movement. I have ministered with people of extreme wealth but yet the most spiritual poor people that I had ever met in my life.

3. How are the Streams Flowing in Your life? There are all sorts of means of grace: jogging, walking, playing with the dogs, being with children; these are all sorts of means of grace. These are things that bring life into us. Here is the crucial question; how are the streams flowing in your life? What is the level of the lake in your life?

4. Illustration of the Big Rocks: One such illustration from perhaps a science class, it is

called the illustration of the big rocks. A science teacher brought her high school class together in the lab. She had several huge glass beakers upon her desk. One beaker has just a few large rocks in it, filled all the way to the top. Another glass beaker had gravel, smaller rocks and gravel. Another glass beaker had sand and yet another glass beaker was filled mostly with water. The teacher looked at her students and said how many of you think we can get all of these beakers into one container? Nobody answered. So, she slowly took the gravel putting them on top of the bigger rocks. What about the sand and the water? Can I get both of them into the same beaker? The students didn't think that she could. So she takes the sand and slower puts it into with the rocks along with a little water slower putting it all in the beaker along with the gravel and larger rocks. So, before you know it, all of it is in that beaker. She then told the students that none of this would have happened if I hadn't put the large rocks in first. So in applying this to our ministry, anytime you go into to any type of ministry for Christ no matter what the situation is, you are going to be pulled by a thousand different demands. There will be lots of gravel, sand, rocks etc. Much of this will come internally in our lives. You will think that this is what is expected of me.

Here is the key; nobody will make it long if you focus on the little rocks or on the little details. You will miss out completely. When the big rocks come first, you can handle the heavy demands of ministry but when you allow the heavy demands of ministry, all the side things to lead you and leave out the big rocks, depletion sets in. You could live in a depleted state for a long time but sooner or later erosion happens and you can no longer be present for the people you are called to serve. This leads to a full blown crisis. If I can get seminary students to do one thing, to not only articulate the few big rocks but to know what it is going to look like to put it in place in their lives. I have been in ministry enough to know that some primarily big rocks are going to have to be in place. There has got to be these big rocks around my relationships with the Lord and around my relationship with others.

5. Example of Big Rocks: These things have to be dispositional. When my son was younger, I would take him mountain climbing in wilderness area in southwest Colorado. I would pull him out of school in the autumn before the big snows hit. I wanted to teach him how to survive in the wilderness in terms of navigation, following maps, following a compass, all of this. We would camp out and after a week he didn't even want to go home again. He said to me, 'let's just live here!' I told them that the snow would eventually be some fifty feet where we were camping and so we had to go home. He was only seven years old at the time and proudly proclaiming that he hadn't brushed his teeth or changed his underwear in over a week! So, disposition is doing what you love.

Nobody tells you to do these things and when you don't do it, you know that there is some deeply missing from your life. These things become a priority in your life. Dispositional living is freedom and it says that these are the big rocks that the Lord wants me to implement on a daily basis. Christian disposition says that this is what I am doing to respond to the love of God and this is what I have to have in place for my life to make sense.

After five years of ministry, I wanted out; after five years of serving as a pastor I looked around and said to myself, you have got to be kidding! Nobody can do this; I had put my own self in a ditch and had no one to blame but myself. I told the Lord that I would give him one more chance! In making that transition, I knew that I had to get alone with God every day. What I would do, is literally walk to the church so that the farmers and rangers would not see my car there because they would be out earlier than I would be and they would stop to visit. I would not only walk to church but would lock myself in and went down into an inner room where they couldn't see the light. I knew that I had to do that to survive. I had to spend time with God, reading his Word and reading classic Christian literature. I did that for two years and it became a disposition, a way of living. In this Christian life of ministry, we are always asking these key questions, what are your primary means of grace; is it prayer? Is it the Word? Is it relationship with others? These are the big rocks! You get the big rocks in and the lake itself stays relatively even. Then God does things that you just never dreamed could or would happen. And as an old person, you get down on your knees and acknowledge the difficult times but acknowledge what God is doing is beyond your understanding. You end in praise and thanksgiving; that is how you want it to end; not walking away angry and upset and negative.

CHAPTER 8. LIVING DISPOSITIONALLY

The Lord desires that we live dispositionally. Important elements include loving God, living devotionally, relational strengthening, and vocational serving (listening with the intent of following what I hear). Dallas Willard wrote, "If I am a disciple of Jesus, I am with him to learn from him, how to be like him." The primary calling of a pastor is to follow Jesus, within the calling of leading a church.

I. Review

We want to submit this to the Lord ahead of time as this presentation is for his glory and kingdom. We ask him to send the Holy Spirit to guide and direct and even to prevent us from saying things that we shouldn't say. We want to depend upon Jesus today. I would like to review the last several sessions just to make sure that you are picking up on the major outline of what I am doing and its' content.

A. Love God and Live Devotionally: Yesterday, we gave the outline of the big rocks, those elements of life that need to be in place in our lives on a daily basis. These are the things we love and cherish. What the Lord is asking for is a dispositional living of saying who you are and what you are about on a daily basis. It is an understanding of those big rocks. I suggested that those rocks are not going to be the same for everybody, but there are some fairly historic and basic Christian large rocks of which the first would need to be the 1st Commandment, to love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. I am summing this up into devotional living, but not necessarily devotional time. In devotional living, ideally we allow the Holy Spirit to get us to the point to be in continual prayer, where prayer is literally our living. This devotional living is fulfilling the great commandment of loving God. Clearly, another big rock is the issue of relational strengthening. I grew up during a time and culture where it was common for me to leave my house at 6 or 6:30 a.m., out on the range literally all day long running fence lines or plowing, or looking after the cattle. It was normal not to ever see another person while I was about this. I rather loved that kind of life. However, when the Lord Jesus got a hold of my life, I realized that I could not live in isolation from others. Yesterday, we talked about the kingdom being a 'we' and not a 'me.' Being a Christian is living in Christian community with one another. Even though Jesus sometimes spoke and dealt with large crowds, even huge crowds, he lived in community with his disciples, not just the twelve but others who were following him. We know there were three others that tagged along with the twelve

if not more.

B. Relational Strengthening: If our Lord modeled that type of community for us, then there has got to be something there in that example that we need to learn, not just to talk about it but to emulate it. To live in this type of ongoing community with others; Howard Hendricks, a famous professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, would say that all of us needs a Paul over us, someone who is training us in the ways of the kingdom and perhaps a Barnabas beside us and then perhaps a Timothy also. So, we are walking together as a family and we are the family of God.

C. Vocation Serving: In relational strengthening, this is fulfilling the second half of the commandment. The first half includes instructions on loving God and the second half is about loving others. We are living this out with loving others. Clearly, one of the big rocks is this issue of vocational serving. The Lord calls and asks for obedience; in Latin it is of two words: *audio*, to listen with the intent of following what I hear. Vocation really has a fairly broad meaning. It is a lot broader than what we commonly tend to think of today. Vocation ultimately and immediately is following Jesus and it is serving God's kingdom.

D. Temple Nurturing: We talked a little about temple nurturing. If you are the body of Christ and if your life is the temple of the Holy Spirit, then clearly, it is to be honored for the sake of God. We love God and we love others and we are called to love ourselves for the sake of God. You need to be careful here, this can be a problem if you love yourself for the sake of yourself. We are talking about a responsible sense of self-care for God's sake. So, we have loving God and loving others, the great commandment and we have this vocational serving which is founded on the great commission. We are to go; we are literally to go into the world. We have temple nurturing that comes from the fourth commandment which can be found in the Book of Exodus. We can be blessed with understanding; there is a time to work and a time to be engaged and there is a time for rest. The best of the Christian tradition, understanding that tradition can be a loaded word. If you look at the tradition of man, that can be really negative. But tradition can be a beautiful word in that what has come in the past two thousand years with people trying to faithfully follow Jesus. We just don't toss that time out the window, as the best of our Christian tradition tells us that when these large rocks are in place, then the reservoir of our lives that is filled by the Holy Spirit, maintains a fairly steady level. In this, we are then giving and serving out of the overflow without draining our basic relationship with Christians and that relationship with the Lord, with others seeking to be vocationally obedient. That big rock of taking care of ourselves for the sake of the Lord; this creates a reservoir of God's love in our lives. It allows us to be present with others and ministry out of a

sense of God's presence and literally God's work within us speaking to others. Remember there is only one stream coming out with many streams flowing into the lake. There is a primary stream coming out of the lake and it is year around. We are doing these things out of faithfulness to Christ and out of gratitude for him. What then happens when some negatives get to us?

II. How to Respond to Negative Experiences

A. Dallas Willard: We need to understand that things can go a different way very quickly. One person, Dallas Willard who has since gone on the glory, was a philosophy professor at Southern California. He was an amazing man of God and an amazing biblical scholar. I actually think that he is one of the great prophets of this day and age. He wrote a text entitled, *The Divine Conspiracy*. I think he wrote it in the late 90s; it took me a year to work my way through it as it was packed with the goodness of God. Clearly, it is one of the all-star texts that I have ever read. Willard said, on page 276, to follow Jesus meant in the first place, to be with him. If I am a disciple of Jesus that means that I am with him to learn how to be like him. If I am going to follow after Christ, if I am going to be a disciple of Jesus, this means that I am with him and to learn how to be like him. All of this is facilitating conditions that help us to be with him; to learn from him and how to be like him. For those of you who are pastors or in pastoral ministry, this is not an easy calling first of all. A part of the large rocks for anyone working in the church whether being a pastor, youth minister, worship leader; a large part of the big rocks for leadership in the local church is realizing that there is a calling within the calling.

B. Calling Within the Calling: I don't want to trip anybody up with strange language here, but what we pastor types tend to think of as our primary calling is to be pastors. Indeed, I recommended a book yesterday on that type of calling by Eugene Peterson. There really is a vocational calling there. But again, I want you to hear about the calling within the calling. There is a deeper calling, a deeper truth. Now, more than likely we will not be pastors all of our lives; we will eventually retire. So, my primary calling is to follow Jesus and I am doing that within another calling of leading the church. But, if I get my primary calling of following Jesus confused and put my functional calling of being a youth minister or worship leader, etc., thinking that is the primary calling of my life, I am setting myself up for disappointment and possibly a huge collapse. My primary calling is to follow Christ and submit my life to him and to be his child and to be like him. He may move me into one particular outlet for that or another particular outlet for that, but wherever he moves me if I miss my primary calling then I will be mistaken in my secondary calling

to the position of a particular place and time. So there is a primary calling and then a secondary calling, a calling within a calling. It is just like my students, they will always start out, out of respect by calling me Dr. Martin. In the very first session of the class, I just say that we will not call very many people doctor in heaven! Maybe some, I am not really sure, but even if we do, I don't think I will be in that rank. So, we don't have to use pretenses or titles; I invite my students to just call me Steve. So, our tradition issues numerous precautions, warning against stepping away from these kinds of things. Tradition tells us that the reservoir of water will dry up and when that happens, some really negative things start to happen.

C. When I Stop Loving God: When I stop loving God, a Pauline term comes to service, *Osabayan*; this has to do with false worship or in fact, no worship. When I stop worshipping the Lord and people assume that we are walking close to the Lord. They assume that we are staying in the Word and being accountable to our elders and governing board or to our covenant groups, whatever you name those small disciple groups. People will assume these kinds of things and this makes it dangerous for me. You can go for years without doing any of those kinds of things, but the people will still assume that you are being faithful in doing what you need to do. The slope becomes rather slippery and this happens rather quickly when I stop loving God as a leader of his church.

D. When I Stop Loving Others: When I stop loving others, it devolves into using others; are the sheep there to be preyed upon? Are they there to promote my career and make me look good? Are they there to float my projects, financially and emotionally, etc. or are they there to be prayed for, to be loved and to be truly shepherded as Jesus would have them to be shepherded. This means at times firm words, loving and gracious words where we are speaking life into them, not cultural nonsense of having all things being dumped into your lap because you are following Christ. We are speaking life; we are mainly speaking the Gospel into them. I don't care what tradition you come out of in terms of leadership; when we are leading the sheep, what do we proclaim, three points, a few illustrations? I hope God saves us from that! We are proclaiming the Gospel that Christ was and is and ever shall be. So we hold up the Word of God without compromise. We live in a cultural time when lots of things are being revived. In that sense, let us hold firm to the fact for us and the Gospel, there is nothing new. It is the ancient word; it is unchanging, it is solid and it is stable. So, I love others by being a co-laborer with the Holy Spirit in leading them into the fullness of the Kingdom. What happens in vocational serving when I get my vocation mixed up; then it devolves into a career; a career in which I am basically there to promote myself.

E. When Self-care for God's Sake Collapses: It then becomes all about me. Of course,

systems are used and abused and then when this self-care for God's sake collapses, either I am completely neglecting sanity. Now, when God created me in his own image, he gave me a genetic structure from the southwestern part of nation of England. That structure represents a tall skinny structure with a long thin face that is genetically pre-dispositioned to be thin. Within that, does that mean that I cannot break this business of over-eating and being a glutton? Of course I can be a glutton. I did a lot of conferencing, not just in the United States where I'm working with pastors globally. This whole business of blowing yourself up through over eating has got to be reckoned with. You are denying the temple that God left you with; you are destroying it. Let us hear a loving word here; whether we are naturally skinny or whether predisposed to be larger people. Whatever we do, we shouldn't put out nonsense about an idealized body type. Does that not destroy children and people? We don't do that in the kingdom. Yesterday, we talked about Thomas Aquinas and when was he called the dumb ox; it was because he was pre-dispositioned, a huge person and overweight. But he was used greatly in God's kingdom. So we have this word, nutritional sanity.

F. God made Us so that We Require Rest: We also require rest and exercise and all these other things that need to be a part of your life. When we understand that exercise can be a phenomenally godly thing and sometimes just taking a nap is what the Lord would want you to do at this point. The Lord doesn't want us to operate on an empty gas tank. There are not all the many true emergencies in life and sometimes, like Jesus did, we have to let Lazarus die. We are not dualists; if my body is an incarnated soul, a gift from God then throughout my life, I'm called to take care of it. Now, I don't make an idol out of it, okay? You don't worship it which would be deep sin, but I am called to take care and exercise it. When these things devolve, then we can fairly well say and going to Saint Augustine in using his language. He wrote the first good Christian autobiography and said, 'you have loved me oh Lord, with a severe mercy.' It is in his text called concessions. Severe mercy simply means that when things devolve, I am going to end up in a Crisis. I often tell my students that God gave us a commandment about taking a Sabbath rest and part of the reason I talk about Eugene Peterson's work is because Peterson does such a wonderful job of talking about the Sabbath and sometimes about taking a Sabbatical. What I tell the students, first, you get that some say whether or not you are going to take your Sabbath day off; you get some freedom in that. But what will usually happen, if you break the Sabbath, you are going to take it one way or the other. Later on, it is going to be determined for you in how you take it for you will be on your back and out of condition. God didn't make us to run on empty; he made us to run being filled with his Holy Spirit. And he also make us to rest in him and let whatever work I do for his kingdom flow out of

my relationship with him and not be grounded in my own natural abilities.

The more natural abilities I have; I might naturally be charismatic, being able to draw people to me. I might be really smart with people just wanting to follow me. The more gifted you are, the more danger there is for all of this to collapsing in your life. I try to warn people with the greatest gifts stand in danger of the greatest fall. We don't want to promote those gifts, for example for music leaders; I tell them that they are not there to be the spotlight on the stage. You must be invisible while you are there. You are successful only when you point people to Jesus in worship, but when people focus on you, then that is idolatry. We are all tempted with that, every person will face that temptation. It is called vain glory and we will describe it a little later. Mercy is a real deal for us and then what will happen.

G. Satan Gets a Foothold in our Lives: When this stuff collapses, then we give Satan a foothold in our lives. My mentor in the faith used to talk about a mini obsession where Satan gets a hold of just a corner of my life because I allowed it. He can't over power the blood of Christ and he cannot over power any person who stands in the Lord. That is not going to happen, except when I allow it, and then negative things can happen.

H. Augustine Describes God rescuing him as a 'severe mercy.' For Saint Augustine, the severe mercy was a positive thing. It was the crisis that came out of Augustine being a heathen. He was smart and good looking and intelligent; he was the equivalent of a professor. He taught upper class Roman children. Well, he was a Berber from North Africa, very handsome and good looking and a profoundly gifted person and a total heathen. You know, I have had students to come in who have been totally rolled in the flesh, the world and the devil, and yet God has gotten a hold on their lives and they are now redeemed in Christ. They are flourishing in the new birth where there is newness and goodness. We don't want to diminish anyone from following Christ. Yet, all of us are in danger of collapsing.

I. The Eight Deadly Sins: Now the early church felt that it was really important to study the game plan of the evil one. We even have somewhat contemporary people who did the same thing; what about C.S. Lewis and the Screw Tape letters? That is exactly what he was doing? He said that this was the most difficult text that he ever had written because he had to get behind the thought of evil. The early church said basically that Satan is going to try and get us caught into eight different avenues which were called the eight deadly sins. The first person that we know in the Christian world who wrote about them was a man by the name of Vagarious of Pontus or Ponticus. He died in 399 AD, but the one who really explicated them is an early father called John Cassian.

Well, John Cassian is my mentor in the faith. I am greatly thankful for him, he wrote text that we are going to refer in the early four hundreds. I think he died around 425 AD. The axiom that emerged out of Luke 10 yesterday, the Mary in us has to rest at the feet of Jesus if the Martha in us is to do her work. The Mary has to rest at the feet of Jesus receiving all that he has for us if the Martha, the vocational fidelity is going to unfold; I have to be at the feet of Jesus in great worship. This has to be dispositional; it has to be who I am not just one time during the day but throughout the day, but this also has to be at specific set times of being with Jesus. We build our lives on theological truths; remember that union precedes *kenosis*. So, union with Jesus goes before self-donating love for Jesus. Oneness with Christ comes before serving Christ. If you get them flipped, you will end up in a ditch or rather off the straight and narrow. And then, we rest on the foundational word that essence precedes existence; in other words, who I am as a gifted child of God, made in the image of God; I am an incarnated soul. The gift of who I am is the major definition of who I am. It is not what I produce or what I do or accomplish; we do all of those things for God's glory and Jesus said that we will be doing even greater things. How inconceivable is that? So, we serve and we work and follow; we also want to have fruitfulness, but the fruitfulness is a means to give praise to God, not to define who I am. Do you see how this gives us freedom for true vocational fidelity?

J. If Satan Would Take Me out of Ministry now, how would he do it? When you go into these things called the Deadly Sins. It isn't an easy path, but I am telling you, if we are going to triumph over evil which will happen with the church. We have to know the game plan and understand just exactly how the evil one will try and take me out of ministry. One of the things I do in order to get people prepared to look at these things, either in a small group or one on one or even personally is to ask a basic question. Okay, if I were to be taken out of ministry, how would the evil one do it? You have to be brutally honest here. What is it in my life that the devil will get at me with? What tempts me now; Jesus says that temptation is common to all people, but we are given the power to resist overcoming that. We are going to look at two primary ways that especially hit those in the church, in leadership in the church and it may surprise you as to what you think might be the primary one. Before we go into that section be thinking about it. First of all, we are going to ask for a covering in going through this. Even though we will go through a valley, Jesus is going to walk with us and help us. Lord we commit this to you; help to honor you in all of this and send your Holy Spirit to break chains. Amen.

CHAPTER 9. THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS (PART 1)

The eight deadly sins are in the order that Satan uses to try to get us and in the order in which we need redemption. Gormandize means you are overdoing it and being a slave to flesh. Fornication refers to a wandering heart and seeking to devour others. Avarice is the love of money and sometimes is a fear of not having enough. Anger is a rancorous spirit. The spiritual cancer of depreciation is looking at the vast horizon of God's goodness in his creation and my life and depreciating it, only seeing what's wrong. Psalm 51:10-12, create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me.

I. The Order is Important

We don't want any of our lives to be an example of what it should not to. We want our lives to be examples of grace and redemption. We don't want any of these eight deadly sins to get a hold on us. Many of you have possibly heard about the seven deadly sins which have a completely different order and actually came later in church history. A man by the name of Gregory the Great, somewhere after the year 590, he took this list and revised them and put them into this new list. He starts out with pride, but I actually like the original list as being better. For those of you who are historians, there is some Greek or pre-Christian thought in this. The early church took the best of that and said that Jesus spoke about these things as well. I don't want to mislead anybody in saying that this just dropped down into the early church. This list has been spelled out by John Cashion so that we can understand them. It is interesting that the list starts in the order where those early fathers say that Satan tries to get us with. They start in the order in which we need redeeming and that are important to us. I want us to understand them. All of you have heard of the term gourmet, a French term. Now, who doesn't like gourmet cooking?

A. Gluttony: But the Latin had a kind of bad term associated with it, called gourmandize, which means that you are eating too much. It is excessively devouring food. It simply means being a slave to food. When I came to this beautiful home, all of us were presented with a living example of gourmandize, having a box of fine German chocolate. And I must admit this can be my down fall for I just love dark chocolate. Well, the Holy Spirit just tells me that I have had enough, stop! You have to break this sin first. If you can't break gluttony, this overly desire for food and tame that in your life, then you are never going to be able to overcome fornication. You are not going to be able to work through that. The way out for gluttony is appropriate fasting. You learn to let the Holy Spirit to say no in your life. Many of the early church people actually fasted Wednesday's and

Friday's but then it changed to Friday's to Thursday evening after a normal meal to the time Jesus died at 3 pm on Friday afternoon. That was a normal fast. They also said that you don't have to have gourmet food either, having common food is good and right. The key is success.

B. Fornication: This is preying and seeking to devour others. Part of what we have got to realize, particularly in pastoral ministry, you move into a full blown adulterous relationship without even touching someone physically. When any pastoral leader works into a place of depending upon a female, for example, drawing strength from her and develops a tight communion with her and draws from her an intimacy which really is inappropriate. In other words, she cannot be my primary strength; she cannot be my primary relational go to person. That is as big a fall as anything which ends up in a physical relationship. We want to be really clear here for men, never to touch a woman in an inappropriate way. We are called to guard our hearts to where we don't develop those types of relationships that replace the primary spouse relationships. I have done enough work around the world and there are women pastors everywhere now. They should know that any problem that any male has ever had works itself into female lives now. I have had to deal with devastating issues where female pastors end up in a physical adulterous affair. More and more, I am having female students coming in hooked on pornography and having to be delivered from that. This isn't at the same rate as males but it is high. So, what is the word from the early church? Chased love! I love the other for God's sake. I am seeking her good or his good and he or she is not there for me to devour.

C. Avarice: Avarice is the love of money. It hits pastoral leadership in a number of ways and within the majority of leaders, avarice will represent a fear of not having enough. That is a great tool of the devil because he will gouge you by saying, 'what if, what if?' What if you can't cover this? What if in your old age, you don't have enough? I have also seen it work the other way where pastors who are paid enormous salaries. Avarice is basically saying, 'how much money is enough?' How much is enough; just a little more. The healing bomb was property of spirit; that deep realization that my well-being and my goodness is found in Christ alone and in Christ alone I can never accumulate enough to secure myself against the elth of the world. It is like what King David said, 'as for me, I am poor and needy.' Now, David wasn't an impoverished person. He was a wealthy man and had a fairly significant military force around him. But he knew that because he was a sinner, he stood in need of God, his love and covering, his savior. All of us in many parts of the world today and even though my wife and I were poor pastors, compared to most of the world today, we are incredible wealthy people.

D. Anger: I don't have any right to be angry at anyone except myself. I sometimes think

that we need to take exception to that; there is a Godly anger, there is a righteous angry and sometimes the man or woman of God needs to take that up and be lovingly firm. There is a good word on this; anger for most of the time is a massive red flag. It says more about us and our demand to have the world ordered to our standards rather than anything about God's righteousness. The remedy is simple to cut it out; Paul had strong words for us as well as Christ also had strong words for us. We need to stay focused on the redemptive power of Christ and the anger of a person doesn't work the righteousness of God.

E. Vainglory: This is basically being impressed with ourselves, thinking that we stand out by doing things really well. After preaching, people often say how great that particular sermon was, etc. It is like a friend of mine being introduced with glowing and flowing language. He got up and said how much he appreciated the introduction but that it is like French perfume, it smells good but if you drank the stuff, it would kill you. So vainglory is drinking the perfume. It is only the Lord who allows us to do any good. In other words, it is because of the goodness of God that I am able to do good for others. Pride, of course, is the destruction of the human person which is the very definition of Satan himself. Pride, essentially, says God, I don't need you, just forget it.

II. Two of the Most Destructive Deadly Sins

That is a brief overview of those sins, but now I want to go more in-depth concerning two of these deadly sins which absolutely ravage pastoral and congregational leadership. You would think that I would have gone to the hot sins of pornography or gluttony or Fornication. Of course, Satan will wheel that weapon as much as he can and it has taken out many of the saints and eliminated them from leadership. I highly recommend works by Gordon McDonald, just a phenomenal leader of the 90s. He wrote a best-selling book called, *Ordering Your World*. After that, he had an affair and had to enter into a fairly serious remedial process. He wrote another text after that called *Reordering Your Private World*. I think this one is the better of the two texts. This is an excellent word on recovering from a collapse. I think the bigger issue for us today is more along the sadness and the despair.

A. The Spiritual Cancer of Depreciation: There is a place called Sandia in the mountains of New Mexico that provides an incredible view, no matter which direction you look. It is at about ten thousand feet up and it offers an unusual geographical outlook. In looking out from that vantage point, you see the amazing beauty of God's creation. It is a beautiful extended horizon that stretches endlessly in a circle. When something appreciates what does it do? It increases in value. But when

something depreciates, it goes down in value. We will be looking at the vast horizon of God's goodness in the world and in his creation and in my life and then in depreciating it, we look upon this horizon and we begin to see only what is wrong. It is a huge issue in the church today.

1. Forced Detachment Crisis: It is a tragic biblical account of this with Michal. Now, I know there are some Hebrew scholars out there, but I am telling you that I am a West Texan and I cannot properly pronounce some of these Hebrew words. You will see in 1st Samuel 18:20 that Michal loved David. Okay, who wouldn't love David? He was tall, strong, and handsome and a hero. David was a young unmarried national hero. He had been out in the sun all of his life; he had a sun tan with flowing hair; just a tough looking military guy. So he was the prize catch in the whole nation. Michal, of course, is Saul's daughter; she is the king's daughter. She is kind of a prize catch herself and she loved David. And Saul gave her to David in marriage. Saul was so threatened by David that he hated David; he used his own daughter as a snare against him. After Michal saved David from the hand of her father, Saul did a mean and cruel thing. He was supposedly a man of God which the Holy Spirit had departed from. He took his daughter and gave her in marriage to another man. At this point, we want to have a huge empathy for Michal. And before we go further into her actual life and situation that unfolds; she was genuinely violated by others. In other words, people abused her; her own father abused her. She truly was victimized by others. We are going to hear a fairly hard word about Michal as this biblical account unfolds.

After Saul and his son Johnathan died, David demanded Michal back. I'm not a hundred percent sure if this was a completely pure act on David's part or if he is just trying to unify the kingdom. But whatever the case was, we know that he ordered her be brought back from which she is now married to another man. So Michal's second husband, Paltiel, follows her back and she is being forced to return to David. He was weeping as he walks behind her. It was not the best of circumstances; she loved him and he loved her. And now what is called a forced detachment crisis. The crisis hit, under this forced detachment, there was nothing they could do about it. They had to literally let go of each other. At some point in Michal's life and her heart, things became dark and hatred filled her life. Few people haven't experience this forced detachment crisis. It is when something is ripped away from you and it wasn't right. How many pastors have I talked to who were forced to leave this or that congregation? Sometimes, it was nothing other than a cruel power play by only a small number of people. Or, what about a disease that suddenly pops up and you have to let go of everything; the vitality you had. What about tragic accidents? When you live in a fallen world, it is waiting and groaning for redemption, and then these kinds of tragedies take place.

2. The Freedom to Say ‘Yes’ to what God is Asking You to Go Through: And what we learn of people who were thrown into Nazi Concentration camps, in the final analysis no one can take away the basic freedom that you have. This freedom allows you to say yes to what God is asking you to go through or simply deny and rail against God and life’s circumstances. My mentor in the faith hid Jews during WWII and he had to go through the entire duration of WWII under Nazi occupation. He dared to print a newspaper of which he would have been shot on sight. He would have been shot for hiding them in farm houses and bringing them food.

3. Adrian van Kaam: During the hungry winter of 1944-45 which was one of the coldest winters in the history of Europe. Adrian van Kaam lived on about 400 calories a day eating tulip bulbs while living in barns and open fields dodging Nazis tyranny that they faced. He lost everything and the people around him lost everything they had. One hundred and fifty thousand people plus, died from starvation in Holland. He was not emancipated until May 8, 1945; the last day of the European war. So it is out of that kind of struggle where you learn that in the midst of having lost everything, Adrian was able to look up and acknowledge to God that he was going to bring purpose into his life. And I know that you are going to bring your will to come to bear, even in this horror. So we have to take the firmness of the Lord here; particularly when bazaar suffering comes upon us and it’s unjust and not right and not deserved. Michal’s heart filled with darkness and hatred. In the final account of Michal, we know that David was going up the temple mount. He was dancing before the Lord as they brought the Arch of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It actually seems that David was dancing in his underwear before the Lord. So, Michal is looking out at him and that is it for her. She despised David in her heart. Who did it end up eating alive, David or Michal? No, it ended up eating her alive and that is what anger does to us. If we don’t ask Christ to help, it will eat us up. If we don’t have a sense of assurance that all things will be set right when the kingdom comes, this anger will eat us up. Sometimes, I look back over my pastoral ministry and I think of those who abused me. I remember those who even physically hit me; it is all going to be resolved. I ask Jesus to have mercy on me for those who I have hurt. And so, Michal, the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death. She was barren in the broadest sense; without any kind of fruit in her life and without any kind of love and goodness. The bitterness she experienced sank her own life and her heart.

B. The Deadly Sin of Tristitia: God calls us to a higher way. He calls us to a more complete way. I remember during the worst of Iraq war when my own son would sometimes call from a satellite phone. We kept our phones by our side day and night during that war. One time he

called us and I heard gun fire in the back ground and my son said that this happens all the time. Then the satellite phone went dead; he was in a branch of special services. During that time, I was driving to work one day. I was a man of the Gospel, a Christian for decades and a Muslim woman cut in front of me in a bazar dangerous way. It was clear that she was an immigrant and that she didn't know how to drive. For a moment, I was facing her driving. She had cut from the right hand lane and had turned her car sideways. She looked at me just as I thought that I was going to drive into her car. There was something in my heart that wanted me to step on the gas pedal to intentionally harm her. When that happened I had to pull over. How can I allow that kind of hatred, that kind of depreciation in my life? I asked for forgiveness. There were people trying to kill my son; they were Muslim radicals trying to kill my son. Some of his best friends came home in a box in that time. Our hearts were broken over this. But the man and woman of God is not called to let anger rule in their lives. And now when I see any Muslim, the call is for God's love to be about them and for God's light to show them the way. We read story after story of Jesus, literally appearing in dreams and visions to Muslim people. We want to pray for the light of the Gospel to come into their lives. So, I think the call of the Lord for us in a world that is polarized and where political structures seem to be collapsing; where society seems to have massive erosion going on in terms of values. And in terms of having anything other than sheer narcissism in egotism of rule and reign in society. I cannot allow my heart to get up into what is wrong; the Gospel will not allow me. I have to find a way forward in all of this. In finding the way forward, I think the Lord will speak to us about how we tend to speak ill of our circumstances.

1. The more you talk about what's wrong with your life, the more exaggerated it becomes. It is like throwing gasoline on a fire. There is a sweet Anglican lady in England by the name of Esther Duvall. She trained at Oxford; and is one of the greatest writers in the world today. I have one of her texts and this one text is about seeking God in the way of Saint Benedict. It's just a wonderful way for Protestants to go back and claim the first fifteen hundred years of church history. The first fifteen hundred years of church history belong as much to us as to anybody else. You and I can learn from people like Benedict. Esther says that complaining can easily become a habit. It becomes part of your personality to gripe and gripe all the time. It is essentially destructive and distracting from the value of everything and everyone around us. It is not the way for us. Remember that great horizon that I was talking about; when you complain you begin to narrow it down to where you are only seeing what wrong with the horizon. I was up walking on Sandia Peak. A friend and I would go up and prayer walk praying over the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico. We walked

by a tour bus load of people. They were all pointing out to the Southwest and saying how terrible. I looked out and only could see goodness in every direction. So I looked out to where they were pointing and saw a thin pencil line of smoke where someone was burning some tires. They were only focused on this pencil line of smoke. And I thought that this is what happens when we get to focusing on what is wrong in our situation. You take the vastness of God's good work in our lives and slam it down to the pencil line of what isn't going the way we want something to go in our lives. It is then that the pencil line starts growing on your horizon until at some point, it is all you see. Paul tells us to put it away from us. Put this corrosive evil and abusive language in Ephesians 4. Get rid of it and cut it out. Bitterness is a bad term; it is that bitter gall that come up from inside. It is wrap and anger and slander and malice; this is not what we walk in, even when people abuse us.

This is not what we walk in. Colossians 3:1-3 says to seek the things that are from above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. This is particular true for those leaders in the Gospel. How can we begin to regain God's good and beautiful horizon, that vast horizon where he is at work in the world, holding all things together and bringing all things to a glorious conclusion in the second coming and the coming of the kingdom and its fullness. We need to hear the call to repent of dark attitudes and words and actions; all of these things that tend to pull us down in that downward spiral that we have been talking about. We need to move into humble dependence upon the Lord. Can we not even pray together aloud, 'create in me a clean heart Oh God and put a right Spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore me to the joy of your salvation and sustain me in willing Spirit.' Amen! Let it be Lord. Paul says to put these things on; put these appreciative clothes on. This is beyond the armor of the Spirit that Jesus gave us. This is a way of living in Christ. This is what the man and woman of God does who is in Christ. Put these things on. Whatever compassion comes down to, it is a sense of having mercy on those who are fallen, even as Jesus has mercy on me as a fallen person. Mercy is in the realm of totally unmerited. *Eleos*, mercy, and do I deserve this? No, I don't deserve it; that is why it is grace. It is given to me because who God is, not because how bad I have been. Thank the Lord that he has been gracious, kind and merciful to me. Humility, for the best of us is realizing that I am totally dependent upon God.

The Lord Jesus is good and is at the right hand of God the father, interceding for us and pleading our cause. He is the one who dispenses grace and sends the Holy Spirit to assist us to be able to follow him. That is called essential humility; I cannot do anything in ministry without his help. I cannot be an effective person without his redemptive help. There is meekness, the power that

comes through throwing off pretense. In the beatitudes, the meek inherits the whole earth. Everything good belongs to those who don't have to put pretense that they are something which they aren't.

2. All the Eight Deadly Sins Reside in You. In the early years of my pastoral leadership and my salvation, I had a lot to learn and grow into then. In the early years of that growth, I really didn't think of myself as a sinner. As a leader, I really thought of the sheep, the people in church, as the sinners and they needed what I had to say. These are things that you hate to admit but as an old man, the truth will come out anyway. The Lord said that I need to put myself into that category as well. I had to understand that I need grace in my life just as much as the people in my congregation need grace. The key for me was reading John Cashion who said that the beginning of holiness is the realization that all of these eight deadly sins reside in my life. What is Paul's basic understanding? He used a couple of interesting words and one of those is *protoss* meaning first or primary or main one, the chief of sinners. I'm the *protoss* of sinners. He said that he was the least of sinners. There is safety in the true understanding here that as a leader I am called to be involved leading and blessing others with God's grace. But I need to understand that I've got to receive that grace as well. You need to put the clothes of patience on, especially with difficult people. I also had to come to a point in pastoral leadership of realizing that some of those who had arguments with me, that it wasn't going to be resolved in this lifetime. I have just got to wait and trust the Lord Jesus in the final coming; he is going to have to work it out. People end up hating me sometimes. This is part of what it means to bear the cross of Christ. At the same time, you don't want to set yourself up with any kind of victim mentality. And you want to be very careful; just because you receive critique doesn't mean it is a bad thing. All leaders need to have critique. That is part of it, but you have to have wisdom in discerning whether there is truth or not truth at all. You have to bear and trust that Jesus will sort it all out. So, we forgive others; we pray that the Lord to forgive us our debts and this load of sin we have. Also we forgive those who have debts against us. We are to actively seek to love others in Christ. We really need to process what has been said here.

So where are you in this story? Are you Michal, filled with bitterness and the whole horizon has just shut down and all that you see is what is wrong. Are you at a time and period of grief and lost where something that you loved has been taken away from you such as your health or a person or a position. Is there genuine grief going on? With David; I am not assured that David didn't have harshness in the way he dealt with Michal.

CHAPTER 10. THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS (PART 2)

When you experience a difficult situation, how do you begin to turn your focus away from the negative and on to what God is doing? How do you respond when you are working closely with people that don't like you? What do you do as a leader when there is a person that is angry with you and disagrees with how you are leading?

A. When you experience a difficult situation, how do you begin to turn your focus away from the negative and on to what God is doing?

We are not finished with Tristitia with this unusual sadness. I wanted to stop so that people could ask more about this topic.

When you were talking about the burning tires off in a distant and not seeing the horizon with only focusing on the little. We are supposed to put that off and put on other things. The practical, when you are in the middle of it, you can't just say stop it. So, how do you start the putting off and the putting on?

We don't deny that we get broadsided; in other words, we get surprised by something and especially when it isn't very good. We will do a whole Chapter on crises and how that impacts us and how we move through that. You can neither deny that when the body or soul is severely injured, your spirit is really hurting. That takes their own horizon. I have been at a point of physical injury and how can you do anything else. We don't want to deny reality and when you are in a time of suffering, you don't want to be confused. I had two bright students, a man and his wife toward the end of their education in Seminary. They were working in a large congregation at the time. One of their parents died; they went to the funeral that week and after a few days, they returned to the church that day. Their pastor expected them to preach. Their boss, the pastor came up to them and said that he was counted on them to put on the joy of the Lord. 'What do you think', they ask me? 'I think you need to turn in your letter or resignation right now because you are working in a false system.' When our brother or sister is hurting, it is our job not to tell them to be quiet. All that says is that we can't cope with it. What I am attacking and what the early church was attacking; when it turns into a way of living where all I see is what is wrong, it is time to do something. We will consider different ways out through such a crisis later in the course. Part of it, you go through the water of suffering and through the valley of the shadow of death; sometimes this takes several years if not a lot of years.

B. How do you respond when you are working closely with people that don't like you?

This has been deeply helpful for me. Sometimes in ministry there are people that just don't like you and you just don't understand why. Something has happened and you are not going to figure it out until you get to glory. You try to forgive each other and move on; there are just some people who don't like me and some of them are still involved in ministry closely with me. I'm trying to understand out to deal with that. Is there a time to disassociate or do you just bear through it. This is probably not a very question.

I need help to answer this so you need to pray for me here. There are times in ministry where I have to dismiss people; I have never been in a pastoral setting where I didn't have to dismiss people. One of those times literally put me in the hospital. You simply cannot allow a dissident voice to bring the ministry to a grinding stop. There were times when I would bring people in and they were spitting nails because of their anger. I am talking about staff here; when I was a lead pastor; there were times when people of the congregation would come in and be also very angry at me. I tried to explain that I had a calling with the leaders of the church in agreement with that calling. You obviously have a different calling for yourself, so perhaps; maybe, this is the time for you to seek another church. Sometimes people would be honest and thus decide to leave. So, at that point you just bless people and let them go. You don't try and forcefully hold anybody. Now, what about a staff member and you are not the boss? And you are really angry with the boss. This is a very real issue for many. You have to make decisions; is there basic moral integrity in your boss? Is he under spiritual authority or are they crossing lines that shouldn't be crossed. If that is the case, then you need to get out. If it isn't the case, then the word of the church historically has been to hold your ground. What did Paul say? Stand, let the Lord do his work. You have come to the church or ministry so that everyone can be a part of your molding in Christ. You see that there are not a lot of easy answers here.

C. What do you do as a leader when there is a person that is angry with you and disagrees with how you are leading?

Well, I have experienced that multiple times. I have never been in a setting where someone didn't come unraveled with what I was doing. And there were even times in a teaching ministry where I will have a student to come completely unraveled with what I am saying. I have got to ask God for grace asking if there is any measure of truth in what this person is saying. People can get as

‘mad as a hen.’ I have had chickens to attack me while feeding them. These people are usually full of exaggeration in what they say. And normally what they say, ‘you are destroying this church.’ How many times have I been told that! The question you must consider, ‘is there any truth in that?’ And ‘do I need to ask for forgiveness from them in some way?’ When that is followed through being truly humble before God and they continue on, then I have done all I can do. There have been times when people of the congregation have had to intervene for me. Sometimes you have to let your elders to take care of it. These are real issues in a divided culture and a divided society. One of the greatest tools of the devil today is where somebody gets outraged. They have been wounded in some way and they want to vent their hurt in every way they can. How do you stand against that and do you do so without being hooked in doing the same thing? The moment you are hooked and start with the same attitude back at them; Satan has established a perfect playhouse. Everybody loses then. Paul tells us to stand and part of what I had to learn, I will stand even when my integrity is being trashed. Why? Jesus has my back! I don’t have to prove anything. I know that I am a sinner and that I have made mistakes. But I am God’s person and I can stand in that. He is going to sort that out in the end; he is going to take care of all of that. But, I can stand. And perhaps God is calling a person to be in leadership in another place. I will do it the way Jesus would do it. I will be firm and call things as I see them.

CHAPTER 11. THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS (PART 3)

The sin of acedia is, “I don’t care anymore.” The sin of tristate is sadness, wrongly processing suffering and loss, allowing the soul to close in on itself and refuse instruction from God. Tristate is neither a result of other people or of our outward circumstances. Satan wants to get us off the track in stupid presumption or in sinful carelessness. God redeems the hurt that evil has done.

I. Reformation of Deformed Disposition

So, now, we let the Lord show us what is called the reformation of deformed disposition. This is the tendency that we have in ministry the idea that the difficulty has increased too broadly for me. What do we do when this happens? I was coming out of a situation where I moved from pastoral leadership and was grieving the whole process. Then, my wife and I went on a Keltic Pilgrimage where we traced the Keltic Christian movement starting in England and Ireland and then in Scotland. I got back home and I was physically tired, I was drained from some of the conflict that we had in the local church.

II. Psalm 9

I was walking in the park and reading Psalm 9 where it says: 'I will give thanks to the Lord and I will do it with my whole heart.' This whole-hearted thanks, means to put your whole body into it; to put your whole life into it. 'I will tell about all your amazing deeds! I will be glad and exult in you.' That is like jumping up and cheering, like at basketball games or if you are a football fan. You jump and cheer and shout. 'I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.' So, as I walked around the park I decided to count my blessings. I started thanking the Lord for different things. You may have grown up singing a song, 'count your blessings, and name them one by one.' This is really a great old Gospel song and there is real truth in it. Psalm 100 starts off with, 'I will enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.' This is thanking God for all kinds of things. It opens a door allowing the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts to the reality of grace that is everywhere and all of his presence. John P. Qu'sod had that classic saying that the grace of God is everywhere and always present but is only open to those who have the eyes to see it. When we enter the gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise, what happens is that you are empowered to overcome these two deadly sins that get a hold on Christians. These are the two most likely ones to destroy us. It is the deadly sin of sadness and the deadly sin of acedia of not caring anymore. This is the great danger of leadership. I just don't care; you can have it; just forget it and count me out. I quit. But, let me say, there are very few leaders who haven't quit; at least they said that they were going to quit many times.

III. The Sin of Tristitia

What is the sin of tristitia, what is this sin of sadness? It is important to really understand this thing. It is wrongly processing suffering; it is not saying that there will not be suffering. It is wrongly processing suffering and loss. It is allowing the soul to close in upon itself and it refuses the grace of God and refuses instruction from God. Yet, you do need to have time for grieving and you do need to go through loss; but you also need to hear the love of God and experience that love. It is 'both' and an 'and' package. We are not going to be cruel, but we are going to allow God to be with us through the suffering that we have to go through. Tristitia is neither a result of other people or of our outward circumstances writes Thomas Merton. Just focus in on this; how often do we say, 'if I can just get this in place or just get that in place or if I just didn't have to deal with that or if I didn't have to struggle with this?' In other words, my well-being is determined by outside factors. This will

destroy a marriage or a relationship very quickly. ‘If she would only or if he would only.’ The wisdom of the ancients is that your well-being cannot be determined by what others do or don’t do. Your well-being is caught up in a relationship with your Lord. Thomas Merton wrote that it takes real courage to recognize that we are the cause of our own unhappiness. He was addressing the sin of tristitia and of course when someone has experienced a massive tragedy in their lives, you don’t throw this kind of stuff at them. They are unhappy and they are going to go through that time. What we are talking about here is our preference to complain on what is wrong. Why do I know that this is so applicable? All you have to do is to show up in any convention of pastors or church leaders. I have done this with Roman Catholics and with Protestants and with Orthodox denominations. I have seen this in Asia, Central America and in the United States. You get groups of pastors together, regardless of denominations, and it is only a few minutes until gripping and complaining starts coming out. Listen leaders, wherever you are around the globe; this is not the way of Christ. If you have a system that is not dealing with issues, please let us know. Whether you are in a higher structured ecclesiastical setting or you are completely independent. There are going to be issues that you are going to have to deal with and one of the greatest issues Merton says that we have to understand is our own preference for sadness. Lord, save us from that.

IV. The Sin of Acedia

Help us Jesus. The early church would call it morbid sadness. Let’s keep in mind that we have made a lot of advances in mental health since that time. When I know someone who is clinically depressed, I ask them, when was the last time they had seen a physician and the last time they have spoken to their physician about this. God can do miracles through medical intervention with mental health issues here. So, let’s don’t get this confused; this morbid sadness involves the propensity to dwell on how bad things are. There was a show in the 1960s in America called Heehaw. It was a funny show and would sing this song: ‘gloom, despair and agony on me. If it weren’t for bad luck, I would have no luck at all.’ This becomes a way of life for a lot of ministry leaders. It cannot be a way of life for us because it is a way that leads to death. The Gospel is not about gloom, despair and agony; it is about chains being broken and people receiving life and love. So, when this stuff keeps on and something worst happens; then the noon day devil of acedia comes to us. The noon-day devil grabs our wiry and anxious heart. It is a demonic spirit that will grab anxious and wiry hearts and drives us to the tragic conclusion that our ministry simple doesn’t matter anymore. Acedia is the wiriness of life itself; being fed-up with everything. It applies to

discouragement; it is a paralysis of the spirit combined with restlessness and indecision. It is in fact, one of the great spiritual diseases of our times. It is a disease of the best minds! It is a disease where well-educated people who are trained in the ministry thinking that things are impossible. We are not going to overcome this stuff. The early church speaks to us and the Holy Spirit checks us and tells us that we are veering off. Satan wants to get us off the path, either to the right in stupid presumptions or to the left in sinful carelessness. We go either to the left where we break God's laws or to the right where we presume upon grace. We become arrogant in our lives and make wrong interpretations about life. This is what happens with acedia. This is the frustrated and sad heart, crying out, 'I quit. It is not worth it anymore. I am not going to put up with it.'

V. There is a Way Out

A. The Goodness of God: There is a way out and now we are going to look at the goodness of God. God loves you too much to let you quit his kingdom. Not only is his kingdom here but it is also his coming kingdom. His kingdom is triumphant. It is unshakable. The atonement says that the back of evil was broken. Jesus is victorious and evil is not going to have the last say and disorder is not going to be the last word. The light and the love are real and it is here and it is triumphant. We need to understand faith, hope and love which Paul talked about. This is an absolute trust and confidence in Jesus. This is not wishy washy stuff. Here, hope is from confidence. This is confirmed in my life. I know that I know that I know that God is good and that his kingdom is here and it is also coming. I know this that all shall be well in him. It is a gift to those who literally abandon themselves to Christ and his benevolence and goodness and to the beneficial meaning of everyday events, circumstances and things. God holds all things together. Evil is not his purpose, he is not the author of evil, but instead, he redeems the hurt that evil has done.

B. Infused Hope: Infused hope says that there is nothing that he can't touch and nothing that he can't heal and you haven't gone so far that you can't be brought back home. That is infused hope.

C. Face the Conditions of the World Today with Sobriety and Compassion: The Christian knows how to face the disastrous condition of the world today with sobriety and compassion. We have compassion on the fallen that are around us. My boss is a man by the name of Dr. Timothy Tenet and he is an awesome person. This whole business of sexuality right now, for example, is going to take the church a long time to get it sorted out, but we have confidence because God has the big picture. God has the way here. The Christian knows how to do this without

falseness and shallowness but with theological hope. I stand on that because of the resurrection and the ascension and enthronement of Christ. That is why I can have hope. In order to do so, we have got to resist this temptation to hopelessness. I look at leaders all over the world; your situation is not hopeless. Hopelessness is selfish; it looks around at the world and it says that I've used all the resources that I know of. There is nothing left; this is a lost cause. Do you see how selfish that is? There are resources that we can't even dream of. God is in control of history; he is sovereign and he is working in and through history. He works in redemptive ways that amazes us and surprises us. Your situation is not hopeless. He is at work. So, we resist this temptation to acedia enabling us to cease blaming our unhappiness on people and circumstances outside of us. Rather than focusing on what is wrong with our lives, we focus upon who God is and how he is at work in our lives. We stop writing these formulas, these false scripts for happiness. It is not 'I hope that' for this boxes God in. Instead, I hope; I have confidence that God is at work in this situation and I thank him that even though I cannot see any way out of it, I have confidence and I thank him ahead of time that he will deliver me. He will work this situation to the praise of his glory. I hope.

Infused hope enables me and you to throw ourselves into a love relationship with Jesus where we spend time with the Living Word who is Christ and the miracle of the written Word that he has given us. We give thanks for that written Word. We listen for his voice; we make commitments to love his people, the people where we have been placed even with the old grouchy ones. How is the Lord calling me to faithfully love the people in my life? We give thanks that he is going to let his grace come in and encourage all of our hearts. We affirm that infused hope is a gift from Jesus.

OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER 12. THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS (PART 4)

In the early church passion was seen as something that controlled you and out of control and leading you astray, not a positive motivation. John Cassion described vainglory as passion to take pleasure in our own qualities. The danger is that we take credit for what God is doing. In pursuit of being popular, we often sacrifice who we are at the core. Pride is the original vice from which all others spring. Pride can develop into functioning atheism. The cure for pride is to have the humility of Jesus in our heart.

I. Vainglory

A. In the Early Church, Passion was not a Positive Term: What I would like to do in

this session is to quickly fill out vainglory and pride which are the seventh and eighth deadly sins. I also must say that I owe these PowerPoints to a stellar student of mine who did this as an advanced project by the name of Nathan Weaver. In the early church, the word passion never was a positive term. Today the term is relatively okay to use. Someone will say something like, I am really passionate about this or that and we know what they are saying and we are good with that. It means that they are really committed to it and love doing it. It has good positive connotations. But the early understanding of the word, it was like a ring in your nose with a big chain on it. It is something that is controlling you and even out of control. It is something that is leading you astray. So Vainglory according to John Cassion, is passion to take pleasure in our own quality whether real or imagined. It is like some of the people I have known who felt called to the music ministry; however, it was obvious they didn't have the gifts and grace to do it. It was a little bit of self-delusion in all of that. This is something like what Cassion is saying here. So vainglory is in-ordinate or just over the top, out of control. When something went really well but at that point it becomes out of control. In that you begin to take full credit for it. So, why is this dangerous for people in ministry? We are asking the Lord to bless and to lead us and very much interested that God receive the praise and for people's lives to be transformed. Those are good and right things. When things do go well and when people bless us and when the name of the Lord is lifted up, we want to give thanks for that. But the danger is that we will start drinking it. We will start focusing more on what we have done to pull this off and how we have made this happen, and we will take some joy in it, some in-ordinate pride in it. You will see this happen when you put people forward for instance and get them in a good position. You know that you had a hand in helping them to get to that place in their lives or even to land in that ministry. Then you start talking in terms of, wow; that was me. When this happens, you have slipped into vain glory. Of course, the Lord has used you in a perhaps smaller way than you thought. But any thought that you are the prime mover that is where it starts to get into vainglory. I think Cassion had a wonderful balanced attitude in that, look, you can receive compliments. That is okay. But you have got to pray in a specific way so that you don't take the credit for the good that transpired. He gave an interesting illustration of a story that was told about a young man trying to understand this.

B. Example from John Cassion: His mentor said I want you to go to the graveyard and stand on its wall. I want you to abuse all of the dead with language. The young man thought that was really strange. He goes to the graveyard and he verbally abuses the dead. The young man returns to his mentor and the mentor says, now tell me how the dead responded. So, when you are abused and

people speak ill of you, I want you to remember what the dead did. This is how I want you to pray, pray Psalm 70:1 be pleased oh God to deliver me; oh Lord make haste to help me. So, when you are abused verbally, you lift up the prayer of psalm 70:1. In other words, deliver me from any kind of anger or retribution or any kind of wanting to get even. Help me to keep my focus on the Lord and not get derailed by this. Help me to be like these people in this grave yard. I want my focus to stay on you. Cassion says now, in like minor, I want you to go to the grave yard and stand on the wall and I want you to praise the dead. So the young man goes to the cemetery and stands on the wall and says all sorts of praise to them. He comes back to the man with the man asking again how they responded. The young man replied, they didn't say a whole lot. Here is how I want you to pray and think. When you are praised and thanked; Cassion says to receive the compliment but immediately lift it up to the Lord in an act of thanksgiving and praise. Again, pray again, be pleased oh God to deliver me; oh Lord make haste to help me. So what are you asking to be delivered from? We are asking God to deliver us from vainglory. You receive the compliment and you are blessed by the compliment and you give thanks to God for the compliment but at the same time praying and asking God to deliver you from thinking that I did this because of my natural goodness. It was Christ at work in me who allowed that. Make haste to help me keep my focus on you and your love.

Vainglory is a dangerous thing for anybody. It is especially dangerous for those who highly succeed in ministry because you can get back from it and you can start talking in a language that opens up the true place of your heart. You can start talking about ministry being my ministry and my influence that did all of this. One of the greatest issues we have and I am been guilty of it. We start talking about my church. It is not my church. We are not the head of the church but only a representative figure, an under shepherd under God. The church belongs to Jesus; he is the head of the church. It is his body and bride. I merely have the privilege of assisting him in being a co-laborer with Christ in all of this. But this is why we pray Scripture in order to deliver us from any sense of holding on to these things as if I am the originator of what transpired here. Yes, God has used you and worked through you and bless you and you are doing great things for his kingdom and without you oh Lord, nothing would happen. If I lapse into vainglory, then it starts to become my kingdom come and my will be done and my glory be known. Remember the words I wrote here, severe mercy? God will love us with a severe mercy when we lapse into that type of thinking.

C. Narcissism is Rampant in Our Culture: I wish I had a selfie-stick. This is a long stick and you put your cell-phone on the end of it and point it back toward yourself so you can start taking pictures of yourself. One of my grandchildren came home one day with one of these. So,

Narcissism in our contemporary culture is who you are, what you make of yourself. This is seen in social media with followers and likes and dislikes. This isn't about being persuasive and having massive crowds. The Lord may use us in crowds but that is his business, but that isn't the point. When we place value in these things, we bow down to the idol, called idolatry of vanity. In pursuit of being popular or interesting, we often sacrifice who we are at the core. Cassion's cure for vainglory is to admit it and face up to it. Instead trying to keep it hidden by vain efforts to eradicate it; those efforts in themselves are prompted by vain vanity. This is both the meek and transparent person. This is why the woman and man of God are called to be in community in such a relationship that we are allowing others in the body to speak into us. For instance, with pastors, they can have a group of people who will coach them and love them and will speak this type of word into their hearts and will be a blessing to them. We are called to find the roots of vanity and sometimes when you get caught up in a 'me' centered egotistic vainglory narcissistic life, and then you always have to be reaching out. You have always got to be connecting and pawing and having other people affirming you, doing likes in your life and media posts. Sometimes, you withdraw for the sake of being with Christ and weening yourself from this culture that will literally choke the life out of us. Whatever we do, we don't do anything for praise alone. Don't try to stick out to get people to notice you and highlight yourself.

This is the word for Christian leadership; you let others do any kind of highlighting. You don't do it yourself. You don't have to push yourself. You are to be humble and let your own work speak for themselves and what the Lord has done through you. You don't have to promote it; you don't have to be in that kind of business. God will do it for you. Mediate on the fact, anything done for the praise of people, the result is loss of rewards before God. I want the acclaim of Jesus and I don't have to try and push myself on others to get that.

II. Pride

The fight against pride is the supreme struggle. It is the original vice in which everything else is based, according to Cassion. Pride is what got Satan into trouble and ultimately, that is what Satan will try and get us with. A quote from C.S. Lewis, through pride, the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind. In vainglory, you start taking credit for yourself and you start pointing toward yourself, but in pride, you just totally cut God out. You begin to live in an isolated world where you are both the subject and the object of the sentence. There is no place for God. And what is frightening is the functional atheism that really continues to be in

God's church. People may come for religious good and religious services but in terms of literally being disciples who place all things before the Lordship of Christ; that isn't even in the thoughts of so many people in the church. James says that he gives all the more grace. God opposes the proud but give grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you. Let it be; Martin Luther says that one little word will fell him. So, pride is the belief that we can be successful through hard work on our own. If you work hard enough and long enough, it will come. One movie about body builders with a line in the movie about the muscle man look of the world. If you think you deserve it, the universe will serve it. How ridiculous!

A. Providence: There is a belief that a person can manufacture happiness and prosperity without any credit given to God's providence. Providence is one of the great theological issues that bring joy to our life. Providence is simple saying who is in control of history and who is ultimately in control of your history. Who is sovereign? I do like that side of reformed theology. Who is sovereign in all of this? God alone is sovereign and he is working his will out in human history. He is working it toward a glorious conclusion. It is placing oneself into the part of the heart that only God can fill. It is saying that I am going to fill up that part. This is idolatry. I am going to be the measure of my life and I am going to set the standards of my life. This is an autarkic view of living; this simply means self-rule and it is also an autonomous view of rule. Autonomous, simply means self-complete. I am self-complete and therefore, I don't need God. I am autarkic; I will live the way I want to live. I will establish the rules. Well, just turn on the news or pick up any magazine or popular social media sites; you will see definitions of pride. The issue for us is not to point our finger at society for we expect them not to get it right. The issue for us is where it is establishing a root in my own life, potentially, in the life of the local congregation that I am serving. You can have prideful congregations. This can happen very quickly. The cure for Pride is to have the humility of Jesus in our hearts; purity of heart is a gift of God and not the rewards of our own efforts. Purity of heart comes to a sheer gift of grace; sanctification is a gift. Do you think you have earned this? No! God graciously gives fruit to our lives when zealous efforts try to show that we correspond with grace. Grace is what brings the fruit. Am I called to co-operate with God? Yes, of course. My will is called to be in submission to the Lord. And if Jesus asks me to pray, I want to be obedient to that. Whatever he says for us to do, we co-operate with this and say yes to this. We give him our will and do our part. God is not against us working hard but he is against us thinking that we are making it all happen.

B. Submitting to ecclesiastical Authority: There is also a very good solid sense of submitting to legitimate ecclesiastical authority. Has God placed solid biblical leadership in our lives? That is a biblical call. For those who are in authority over me, I am a person under authority. I have two elders over me of which both of them are elders in the church. If one of them tells me to do something, then I am under authority by God to do that. That is just how it is and I'm okay with that. I am so blessed that both of the elders over me are Godly men. My dean is a man of God and my president is a man of God. My provost is a man of God. There is always safety in submission. There is a lot of danger in self-will. Are there times when I should not put myself in submission under others? Oh yes; I don't submit to any process that asks me to break a known law of God. I do not submit to any process or to any person who asks me to break a known law of God. We don't even quibble about things like that. So Merton wrote that pride makes us artificial, puffed up and plastic, but humility makes us real. I love that. So, we give thanks for the goodness of God in our lives as we look back on all of these deadly sins: gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, sadness, acedia, vainglory, and pride.

III. Spiritual Weapons and Resources

A. Personal Example: We want to take up spiritual weapons and spiritual resources. Let me give you a very real life illustration that took place for my wife and me some years ago. I already mentioned our youngest child joined the Special Forces and went off to war. We knew that he was in imminent danger and it wasn't long where he was with his little group of four men. Just as his group walked out of a building, the building vaporized from an Iranian rocket that came. It wasn't long after that our son's best friend and partner in the military was killed in a mission by our son's side. This happened to a lot of people; all to return to the States in a box. It was at that point that I realized that I had an inadequate prayer life. I just looked up at God and asked God to help me and my wife; we had everybody we knew in Christendom worldwide praying for our son. I would send out prayer letters; we were supported in an amazing way. I had my son's picture upon my office door and I had colleagues that helped carry us in prevailing prayer. How do you pray in a situation like this? How do you take up the weapons of righteousness? And through sheer grace, the Lord led me to II Chronicles 20. I don't know how I got there. This was a time when the Moabites and the Ammonites were coming against Israel. There is nothing new under the sun in that part of the world. So a great crowd is coming against the Israelites and old fat Jehoshaphat being the king in verse 3, it says that he was afraid. He sat himself to seek the Lord. There would have been posture in

that; this is like falling down on your face before God. So he sat himself before the Lord in order to seek the Lord and proclaim the fast throughout all Judah. Judah assemblies to seek help from the Lord. From the towns of Judah, they came to seek the Lord. He is bringing the body of the people of God together to ask for help. Jehoshaphat prays and stands before the assembly of Judah in Jerusalem in verse 5 and the House of the Lord. He says, Lord of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? This is a plea of desperation. Do you not rule over all the kingdoms and the nations? It is okay sometimes to remind God of his omnipotence. In your hand is power and might and no one is able to withstand you. Did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before us? They had lived in it and built a sanctuary for your name. We will stand before this house.

B. He Fights with Thanksgiving and Praise: My house is the house of prayer and he is going to the house of God; he is praying in the House of God. For your name is in this house and we cry to you in our distress and you will hear; this person is extending themselves in faith. Keep in mind that faith is absolute trust in the divine goodness and divine providence of God. He is extending himself. He is praying and he concludes his prayer in verse 12; Oh God will you not execute judgement upon them who are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. This is like songs of a sin. The handmaiden looks to her maid. The servant looks to the master, our eyes are upon you. Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, 'Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.' There are resources that they couldn't even imagine here. 'Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a loud voice. This is the choir standing up praising God with a loud voice. And they went out into the wilderness of Tekoa, Jehoshaphat stood and said, hear me, Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of

Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.’ He is fighting with thanksgiving and praise. It is a vocal act of worship. This is action; it is bodily language which has content and objectivity. We are thanking and praising God. He appoints the people who were to sing to the Lord. As they went before the army; the choir is out front. He puts the people of praise out front and at that moment, I knew how I was to pray for my children, particularly my son who was in trouble. In some ways, this is the heart of the Old Testament. They were to sing, ‘give thanks to the Lord for his steadfast love that endures forever’ and you see this throughout the Psalms, like Psalm 136.

They are giving themselves in thanksgiving in how he is going to work. Oh, give thanks to the Lord and then they are declaring the nature of God for he is good and declaring and singing about how the Lord works with us. ‘For his steadfast love endures forever.’ That cannot be taken away from us. It is just not going to happen. He is saying that he is encapsulating us in his steadfast love. That doesn’t mean that you will never experience pain. Paul wasn’t devoid of pain. There is a measure of suffering for the body of Christ. So, let’s stay biblically grounded here, but you will not be taken away from the love of Christ. Well, the battle was the Lord’s that day.

C. Psalm 149: Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the Godly! Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King! Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre! For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he advances the humble with salvation. Let the Godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their throats with two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the written judgment! This is honor for all his Godly ones. Praise the LORD!

What is the sword here? It is the Word; this is an offensive weapon. It is the Word of God to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the people. This is the glory for all his faithful ones. Praise the Lord! Whether we are fighting a battle against the eight deadly sins; of course, there are other deadly sins listed in Scripture. All you have to do is read through the Sermon on the Mount. There are others while these eight are simply an overview. We are fighting against the deadly sins and principalities, and also rulers that are trying to work themselves into institutions or perhaps even into the congregations. I know that there are people listening to this in parts of the world where their lives are in danger for calling upon the name of Christ. I have students this very day from places like Northern Nigeria and from other parts of Africa, from the Sudan and also

Middle Eastern students that call upon the name of Christ. This places all of their lives in danger. So whatever we are dealing with: a personal injury or the result of the fall where some disease has come upon us, we want to take up the weapons of righteousness for this and we want to walk in the way the Lord has asked us to walk. The Anglicans have these prayers for every Psalm; there is a prayer that kind of summarizes Psalm 149; give us hearts to praise you all our days and the will to reject the world's deceit that we may bind the evils of our age and proclaim the Good News of salvation.

D. 2nd Corinthians 6:7: What did Paul write in 2nd Corinthians 6:7? It says that by truthful speech and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left. It is the weapons of righteousness for the left hand and the right hand. He is probably talking about a sword in the right hand and a shield in the left hand.

E. How do I Change: We are taking up the Word of God and we are allowing the shield of faith to keep us firm and steady. The Lord is quenching the darts of the evil. We are standing fast.

F. In 1st John 5:4: and this is the victory that conquers the world. It is our faith; a steadfast assurance in the love, the care, the power and the providential goodness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

G. 2nd Corinthians 10:3, 5: Think then about what Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 10:3-5, 'we do not wage war according to human standards.' We don't take up an evil response for someone who has done evil against us. The weapons of our warfare are not merely human but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We take every thought captive to obey Christ.

We are out of the valley of the eight deadly sins. We are triumphant in Christ and we proclaim with assurance; we are overcomers in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is because of his efficacy in our lives. There is nothing but Good News here. There is never a reason why sin should overpower us unless we allow it. There is always substantial love and grace to carry us to every season that we have to go through. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who is faithful to his people. Amen.

CHAPTER 13. THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS: QUESTION AND ANSWER

Is there a sin that's not deadly? To what extent can you worry about something before it becomes a sin?

What does it take to overcome gluttony? The minute you make an exception for yourself, you either presume on the grace of God or break a known law of God. Admit what you are feeling and submit it to God to have faith in him in the situation, then do your part.

I. Is there a sin that's Not Deadly?

It is important to integrate these things into our hearts. How many messages have you heard that you have integrated into your heart? Sometimes questions in regards to these things can help.

What is the popular thought to this? There are little white lies and small sins. The minute you make an exception for yourself, that is when you are going to either fall off into stupid presumption or where you presume upon the grace of God; so, is that anything but a deadly sin? They are all deadly.

II. To What Extent Can You Worry about Something before it Becomes a Sin?

I'm worried about that. You have talked enough about this for me to say that this isn't my problem, but everyday worries are.

Well, what is worry? One of my friends defines worry like this: it is praying to yourself. In Philippians 4:4: rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. Why? The Lord is near, close by. He is right beside us. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made know to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

How often does a concern pop up in your mind? Sometimes there are large worries going on in the background. Some of them are dark and huge terrible storm clouds; fearing what is coming and brewing. I see from the best of our traditions in regards to anxiety and worry is that we want to take every thought captive for Christ. Now, if the Word identifies my worry as something that is not in accordance with God's will, then I have got to submit that. So, for me, it begins by me saying, okay Lord, I have got a worry here, I have a concern. For example, in flying different places, I have experienced some violent turbulences; some of the worst being over the northern Atlantic. Even on

this trip we hit a little bit of chop and some of those past memories returned and a bit of anxiety returned. But the Lord spoke to me and said stop it; that is not what you are called to do or who you are called to be. I admit it, Lord Jesus this is anxiety which isn't of you. So, please God deliver me from it. Then what does the remainder of the Word say? The peace of God which transcends and goes beyond all understanding will guard you and protect your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. So, no anxiety, no fear, and no anger and no adulterous thoughts, no gluttonous thoughts; so, you have to admit it and sometimes I have to confess it. Now, temptation is not a sin; all of us are tempted. If I have an evil thought in my mind, I bring it to Christ and ask forgiveness. It also may be something that I need to nail on the Cross, something really bad in my own mind. Lord, please nail it on the Cross. This has got to die; the sin nature has got to die. It is not of you.

III. Overcoming Gluttony:

That is not straight out of Scripture. We need to make those distinctions. That is the wisdom of early tradition but that is a little lower rung than Scripture. This is what the early church observed; if you can't overcome gluttony, then it is going to make it a whole lot more difficult to work your way down, especially with adultery.

CHAPTER 14: THE EIGHT DEADLY SINS: TOOLS TO DEAL WITH THEM

Instead of gluttony, we see temperance. Temperance means living a balanced life. Chaste love is extending love to others, not preying on them. Poverty of spirit rather than greed. Cultivate meekness to deal with anger. You have been forgiven much so you should be willing to forgive others much. Cultivate faith, hope and love to deal with hopelessness. Cultivate humility to deal with vainglory. Evangelism in the first 300 years is a result of the quality of the lives of disciples as they lived in a hostile environment.

I. Review

We want to briefly go back and consider some of the things we have discussed and to see where the Lord wants us in terms of some of the virtues and fruit of the faith and righteous living. In regards to some of our red flag issues, such as gluttony being false bread, it is as if I am trying to stuff my life with things that aren't going to bring any kind of fulfillment at all. What am I trying to fill my life with; those God shaped places are going to be filled with anything other than divine spiritual love. I can keep stuffing and keep stuffing and keep getting larger, both literally and

figuratively in destructive divisions of my soul. Even with my own students, I get so irritated at times with them surfing the WEB. They like to multitask; but I tell them to get their minds focused and their hearts focused. Just put the machine down; put the device down; part of what we are about in this spiritual life is being able to focus upon the Lord Jesus. Then there is the whole business of using others; there are lots of ways to use others. We want to avoid that; that isn't the way of Christ. Others are not there for me to use or abuse or feast on in any way. That is not the way of Christ.

A. Greed: Either fear drives greed; the fear of not having enough. How many times have people gone into corruption because of the fear of not having enough or this inordinate insatiable drive to accumulate more and more and more. If you ever watch some the shows on American television, you will see people going around looking for antiques. Sometimes there will be barn-house after barn-house where people have hoarded things all their own lives. What do you take to heaven? This is the issue here. Nothing goes with you to heaven, except that what is in your heart. It is the love of God, the loving relationships that we have. All of this we eventually have to let go of.

B. Anger: We love to get inflamed; we love to have a spirit of offense, where we are profoundly offended by the actions of others. You can tell the measure of a human being by what upsets them. Surely I am the pot calling the kettle black here; an American term which means I am guilty of doing this. Yet, there is a better way.

C. Sadness: Sadness is this whole idea thinking that you had a good plan for your life and a good purpose for your life, but at how it is all messed up now. My spirit becomes down cast; hopelessness can result.

D. Vainglory: One word that can be added to vainglory that is right out of Pauline thought in Romans 2:8. Paul says those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness. Saint Augustine picked up on this along with Martin Luther. In Latin, it goes like this *ingratu insay*; the self, curving back upon itself. So the Lord created us to be in a life-giving loving relationship with him. So, the trajectory of my life and my love and will is designed to be in deep on-going everyday intimacy with the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit. But, what happens in self-seeking, I bend it back upon myself. It is a deadly loop. These things are there for me. This setting and situation is there to promote me. It is the self-bending back upon itself. Suddenly a big fat me becomes the center of the universe. It was never meant to be that way.

E. Pride: then the collapse to all of this comes down to pride where ultimately I become a functional atheist or and outright atheist where I push God out; I don't need him. I am fine without God. I am getting along with my business, the way I think that I need to be. We find this in

congregations today; people who only want a little religious favoring on Sunday morning and not much else. Dallas Willard called them vampire Christians.

II. From-Through-To Movement

This becomes a from-through-to movement. Clearly the Lord wants us to move from this kind of fallen life that is fully encouraged by the self-bending back upon itself by putting ourselves as the lord of life. This usually takes us through some type of, either a crisis or crises, so that God can get us to the place of Christ likeness. This is where we want him to bring us. This is the mature person in Christ; this is the place of wholeness, a place where I can be in service.

A. Examples: The through part is in his virtue, what the life of Christ would look like in us. When it comes to gluttony; what do we see? We see temperance, an over-used word in American Protestantism, particularly early in the nineteen hundreds. However, if we look at the classical understanding of temperance, it just means that I am living a balanced life. I can enjoy a nice cup of coffee or a cup of tea. I also love dark chocolate. If I do all things in moderation, that is a life of temperance. This puts a Holy Spirit diet in us. All things held in balance and all things to the glory of God. Then when it comes to using others in the Christian life; we are not called to use others. I am called to exercise what classically has been termed, ‘chaste love.’ This is where I do not prey on others but I graciously extend the love of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to others. I am blessing others; I am showing them that I want to be an epiphany to them of the love of Christ so that each of us, as Paul says, are little praises of his Glory reflecting his love to those around us and to those in his care. It is important that this Holy Spirit level is maintained in my life so that I can have that kind of a presence.

B. Poverty of Spirit: Then when it comes to greed, that poverty of spirit is the greater way; meaning that I am totally dependent upon the Lord and he promises to be with me and take care of this. Do we rest on his promises or do we take matters into our own hands. So poverty of spirit is thanking the Lord on how he is going to resolve these issues in my life and how there will be enough for all things needful. Everything that is needed will be covered. Then anger works into a sense of meekness where I know that if the Lord Jesus can forgive me of all that he has forgiven me of; I deserved the punishment of death as the sinner. Yet, he has forgiven me of that debt and he took my place and has allowed me to enter a relationship with God the Father that I was destined to have from before the beginning of time. So, if I have been forgiven of that kind of a death sentence, he will give me grace to forgive others.

C. Meekness: Meekness is just saying that I am a sinner in need of grace and I can extend that grace to others. It also says that in Gospel language and Gospel understanding of life, there is suffering to be carried in the Christian life and I can see it as a privilege to suffer for Christ. It is not that I am going to work out anything more for the salvation of anybody by suffering. We don't see suffering in itself as a virtue. However, why would we expect as followers of Jesus to be exempted from what he went through. So, if our Lord went through immense suffering for the sake of the Gospel, bring the full message that the Father wanted him to bring to us. Then, I too, can say thank you Lord and that I can carry whatever Cross you are giving to me and allowing me to carry.

D. Appreciative Love and Patience: Now, sadness is going to give way into appreciative love and patience. Rather than seeing that the world is coming apart and everything narrowing down to darkness; no, I can appreciate what God is doing even when I can't see it. This is faith. Even when I can't see it; I can thank him for what he is doing in this situation.

E. Infused Faith, Hope and Love: Hopelessness is going to give way to infused faith, hope and love. Infused just means that this is not something that I have fabricated on my own; this is a sheer gift of grace from God. God's love, gives me the Pauline triad: faith, hope and love. This is infused faith, hope and love.

F. Humility: Vainglory once again gives way to absolute humility. I will know that every good thing coming in and through and out of my life is a result of grace.

G. Pride: Well, pride has to be broken. This has to be crucified. You can't live with pride; this is something that does not take us anywhere other than into death. Even here, we are going to see this through process now.

H. Penthos: With all of these, there will indeed be a life giving process called Penthos. This was the gift of tears. In the early church around the three or four hundred AD you see this; it was a deep sense of lost salvation and there was mourning, deep mourning and sadness over the loss of salvation. It is a loss of all the benefits of salvation in my life and deep mourning in looking out at the world and seeing the collapse of people and tragedy of people's lives that just didn't have to be that way. They get wrapped in the passion and the self-curving things that just destroy them. The loss of salvation in the world and this would bring tears; literal tears, so that a holy person during that time had to be given this gift of tears over the loss of life in the world. So, Penthos is sorrow over these things and an asking of and a reaching out to God, saying to the Lord, I repent. I need your help to make this turn.

I. Discipleship: With this through movement, we call this, discipleship; the active business

of following Jesus. In all of this, there is going to be a through movement. While we want to be so grateful and appreciative of the food that the Lord provides and how he provides all things necessary, we are also going to start feeding, feasting and dwelling on what the bread of life. This is where we are going to find the true banquet. And this through process is going to take us deep into allowing the Word to master us. This business of using others; we are going to actively work into a life of serving others.

III. Serving Others

We don't use others; instead we serve others in Jesus' name. This is why the early church grew against unbelievable odds. How did the church grow when people were being crucified for being Christians? How did that happen for the first 350 years? A big part of it was the quality of their lives in a very hostile society and also for their love for others. They showed and demonstrated Christ's love for the body. In terms of greed, we are realizing that all things belong to the Lord. I have nothing and I am learning how to give, not out of a scarcity mentality but out of a trusting mentality. I am very clear on the fact that all I get to do is to manage it. I don't own it; what do I own? Nothing! Even in not owning anything, all things become ours in Christ. So, in anger, I'm learning how to step back; in other words, being a human being. I am allowing the Lord to temper my spirit in the sense that I don't have to vent against others. I am totally trusting that God is going to resolve this situation in ways that I can't even imagine. And I don't have to be the one tearing down the walls of Jericho. It is not my job; my job is to lead forth with praise and thanksgiving, not with anything else. Then of course, with sadness, I am beginning to focus on the hope of the Gospel. One old Gospel hymn goes like this: 'my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest things, but holly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand.' That is the Gospel! That is infused hope. I really don't think the Lord cares whether we sing old or new songs; I do think he wants us to know the Psalms which is our prayer manual. Any hymn like this that talks about infused grace and hope is our foundation. This is the hope of the Gospel. This is not a desperate situation; God is still in control. All shall be well and at this point, let me give you a major 'from and through' movement here.

IV. Difference between Expectation and Anticipation

We learn this business of what the difference is between expectation verses anticipation. I

owe this insight to Adrian Van Com. Anytime I put an expectation out there in regards to the business that ‘I hope that.’ In other words, I am locking down reality. ‘I will be happy if’ and you fill in the remainder. Lord, this is what I need for my life to be complete. This is either who I need in my life or this is what I need for circumstances to unfold in my life. This is it: A, B, C and D. Part of the problem with this is that, here I am as a creature dictating to the creator what is best for my life. That is the self-curving back; this is me writing the script. When we come to Jesus, we take the script that we have had and lay it. So now, the script becomes not me parsing out what it is going to take to make me happy. That is expectation; rather, I learn to anticipate. Well, what am I anticipating? First of all, God knows what I need. The heavenly Father loves me and is able to provide all sorts of amazing good things in my life. He knows that. And I can trust him to do that even in amazing and surprising ways. Expectation, this is what I want, this is my vision; this is my world and this is what is going to take to get it all placed out. For those of you in congregational leadership, you are going to have a few people who are like this. They have gotten everything and more than they have ever dreamed of. Sometimes, these people will be the most miserable people in your congregation. They may be wealthy in some areas but in terms of true wealth, no, they are profoundly impoverished people. Rather, we are in anticipation abandoning our lives to Christ. I am laying my life down, saying Lord I know that you have got this and I am thanking you ahead of time for how it is going to work out.

So, sadness through grace is transformed into anticipating the goodness of God and then these gifts of infused faith, hope and love come in even when I can’t see how it is working out. I truly believe, even at the end of our lives when we know death is imminent. This is just as applicable as anywhere. I can trust because who fears death after the resurrection? There is no fear of death after the resurrection. That has been broken; it is nothing that we need to worry about in Christ. Then, of course, with vain glory, what is happening? Here, we have had a loop that feeding back in upon itself. Now, the loop may be a little wavy and it may want to come back some, but the Lord himself is working it out where my love and my focus are starting to be on him rather than on self or rather than on fear or anger or any of these other things. I am seeing him; my heart and my focus are moving forward, the way it is meant to go. With pride, there is only one tool left now that the Lord has to work with pride. It is the tool that he had to use to get a hold of Saint Augustine. That tool is severe mercy where he allows a major crisis to come and stop the man in his track. As a pastoral leader, these crises actually can be our best friends. The Lord uses crises to wake people up. He shouts to them in their pain. For once you might have an audience that is actually listening. If the

Lord uses crises to help get us all over into a life where we are following after him, then it would be good next to take a look at the dynamics of crises.

CHAPTER 15. CRISIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (PART 1)

A transcendent crisis is yearning for the “more than.” “Is life meaningful?” “Is God good?” Can I trust my life to God or have I been abandoned by God? An idolatry crisis happens when you run after a passion rather than pursue God. Each person in your sphere of influence is going through crises in their own lives. God can use a crisis to help something in us die so we can experience and share the light of Christ.

I. Examples of Crises

A. Psalm 16: Why would Augustine talk in terms of a blessed crisis? This is so counter cultural to anything that we have ever thought of. We don't see anything as being blessed in terms of a crisis. I think it would be good to look at some Biblical illustrations of crisis. For example, in the Messianic Psalm, Psalm 16 is one of the great Psalms; 'Protect me, O God, for I have taken shelter in you.' The word protect is from the Hebrew *shamar* to guard, protect, attend to, etc. I could as easily read, 'preserve me oh God.' Preservation is holding things together, keeping it from flying apart. In Col 1:17, it says that he himself existed before anything else did, and he holds all things together.' There seems to be a crisis unfolding in the Psalmist's life which relates to what Jesus went through during time of the last supper and Jesus is in the garden praying and the stress in his life was so great that blood vessels ruptured in his body where great sweat of blood came out. This is some very serious stress. David was asking God to hold him together as life threatened to tear him apart. Is this not a good place to begin in terms of understanding crises? Most of us not only have a crisis but usually different crises in our lives. We are fairly assured that for those in ministry; you are truly blessed with a number of crises.

B. Teresa of Avila: Teresa of Avila was pondering about of the hardship that she had to face as a leader. She complained to God sayings, 'God, since you treat your beloved like this, it is no wonder you have so few friends.' Crisis threatens to tear us apart; they are real. There are many imagined crises where we allow our own insecurities to run uncontrolled along with our own fears. Sometimes they are not a real crisis at all. Let consider what real crises are and give some definition to them. Think about it in your own life; think about a recent crisis. Let's put it in a category.

II. Forced Detachment Crises

Let us look at something called forced detachment crises. These include something like death. When death comes along, there isn't anything you can do about it. This is the worst of such a type of crisis. Someone dies; there is death which really points out the greater issue of finitude, meaning that I am a finite creature, at least in this phrase of our lives in Christ. We have a beginning and we will have an ending. Now we realize that the ending is actually just the beginning. We find ourselves with physical limitations; I use to jog for a long time but I got to a point in my life where I couldn't continue. Instead I just walk now. This is a physical limitation that I now have. Then there are relational conflicts and meltdowns or relational meltdowns. There is a US TV commercial where a young woman is throwing all the stuff of her husband or boyfriend out of the window crashing on the concrete below. It would be safe to say that this was a relational meltdown. These things are very real and also real in church. One of the things that brought deep pain into my life after serving and loving people and being gracious to them, some even being sacrificial and then they just walk away and leave that local fellowship. Well, that really hurts. You feel this anytime where you have been in a loving friendship and ministry relationship with someone and then it just flies apart. It is gone. You see these types of detachment crisis when you have to deal with addictions; you see it in the midst of disasters. I was in India during a major typhoon that created incredible devastation.

Of course, when these natural disasters happen, people's lives are complete disrupted. You see this in all sorts of family traumas. Certainly you see this when there is political break downs and in the midst of wars and fighting. Anytime there is political unrest or even political meltdowns where there is a disruption that simply goes through an entire nation. Even now, there is a lot of political dynamics shifting and not for the best in terms of Christians. So, political unrest; national and international conflicts; we literally see what I would call societal breakdowns. We wonder about the foundations shaking; what do we do oh Lord when the foundations shake and what do we hear in reply? The Lord laughs! These are things that one individual really has to flow with these things or you get rolled by them.

III Transcendent Crises

There are also transcendent crises; this is a crisis of yearning for the more than in life. Didn't the Lord create us with that yearning and hunger? Augustine cried out that our hearts were restless in his autobiographical confessions. Our hearts are restless until they rest in you. So, this is transcendent longing; a deep longing for the more than. This longing will work itself out through

most of our lives. We long over issues of who I am; we long to know where we fit in, what am I called to and where do I serve? Who do I serve with? These are transcendent issues for us and ultimately in a crisis, we will see this transcendence and ask some serious questions when crisis hits. Is life meaningful? This is a huge issue and the deeper one underneath this is whether or not God is good? Of course the emphasis here is whether you can trust your life to the goodness of God. Can I abandon my life to God or have I been abandoned by God?

IV Danger of an Idolatry Crisis

I also think that any of those deadly sins are going to lead to an idolatry crisis. This is where you run after any passion, any of those deadly sins. We are bowing down to something other than Jesus. Remember that he loves us enough to bring about what Augustine called severe mercy.

IV. Ministry Crises

There are also ministry crises. You are a leader and out there on the front lines. Have any of you now in Christian ministry not been through some type of crises? Ministries all over the world are stressed financially with a lack of resources. The next crises have to do with relational crisis. See how they love one another. Oh, wait a minute; see how they go for each other's throat! Even beyond that, I do think that there are also times when the Lord simply allows ministries they may have flowed forth in goodness for a while and seen a lot of blessings, but then they seem to ebb. We can be thankful for that but sometimes they ebb back. In America, right now, there are a number of locals where you see huge growth in terms of the Gospel being effective and people regularly coming together and finding their way in Christ. There are also a number of settings where there is a huge retreat and in some areas it rare to find a solid congregation. There are some amazing congregations in Europe and England, but Christianity isn't moving forward numerically in Europe and Asia at the moment. It takes a great deal of discernment to understand where we are sometimes, but there are times when ministry ebbs. We wonder sometimes what the Lord is doing. We have equations where being faithful will equal to things growing. The life of the Gospel always brings growth in Christ; however what are the metrics and statistics here? Sometimes fidelity to the Gospel may mean that the actual number of people you are dealing with will decrease. There was a time in Jesus' ministry where he had to ask his disciples whether they would also leave him. We need to be careful with the equations of success. You will not be in a ministry very long where you will not be in any major crisis.

I was in a beautiful location in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was a wonderful church. St Stephen's church. Early one morning I walked into the church; the city sewer system had backed up into that church. It was not a pretty picture at all. This was a crisis of a different kind with having a special cleanup crew to come in protective suits and taking the place apart. So, there will be crisis where you have to go through in ministry. And in regards to ministry, you are dealing with a whole congregation of people and they are also facing different crises which you have to help them through. So you have your crisis added to different individual crises within the church; this can represent a huge load for any pastor. On a normal day in pastoral ministry, it isn't uncommon for four or five different people to come in with devastating issues in their lives. They are seeking God's word through the pastor. No one can bear up under this type of load day in and day out, week in and week out and year in and year out. It will collapse the best of human beings. Only Christ had the ability to take such as this and absorb it on the Cross where it was nailed. We are under shepherds and servants in this way. I remember being profoundly fatigued in ministry. This is a major red flag in your life. You will get to the point of wanted to run away from people with problems; it becomes too much to take on anybody else's problems.

All of this point to the major need for healthy rhythms of life, including daily times with God. You need to have weekly rests. God took the seventh day off for rest and you should also. There needs to be regular build in times away in order to get perspective. You need to also have time away, yearly. You need to get completely away from everything and everybody. I thank God that a lot of my ministry was before the cell phone, so I wasn't omni-available. Omni-availability is not healthy. The congregation needs to understand that the Lord is omni-available to them. Omni-availability is a sign of sickness; never ask a pastor to give their cell-phone number out when they are on vacation. You also need to understand the true nature of crisis. When a church member has a genuine crisis and you are there, then you need to be responsive to that. These things happen and they need to be addressed. Pastors should have times of study on a daily basis where you don't answer the phone and you can explain this to your congregation that you have to have times away. If there is a true emergency, then that is different. You can discuss this with the board and the congregation to set a time apart. You also need to be aware that if you are out six times a week in the evening then you are going to experience one of these crises. This is not good stewardship for the man or woman of God. A lot of the Stewardship can be turned over to the people of God. You need to understand your own vocation.

V. Crucifying Epiphany

Psalm 16 feels like it is going to tear us apart. There is the idea of crucifying epiphany. In crucifixion, something dies and then epiphany is a New Testament term. This is the light of God; it is the showing of Christ that is made known in dawning of the day. It is the goodness of God that comes to us. It is the goodness that comes from something dying. That is the whole point of these crises. Normally when these things unfold, the Lord is seeking to bring about purification in our own lives of something that we are holding onto. But let's make a qualification first. Pastors usually have to work with major strategies. In one such church, there was this adorable child that just blessed everyone around her. One night, she was hit by a car and died. This just broke our hearts, lying dead on the road. There is nothing that the pastor can say at such a situation except just help when he or she can. I am not from such a theological tradition to say that this was, in any way, the will of God nor do I believe that God was enacting punishment on this family. This child was a blessed little girl who loved Jesus. God allowed the accident to happen but God wasn't the cause of it. God is not the cause of evil. In such a situation, it is going to take a long time to see God in such a setting. I can only walk with the family, reflecting on the firm confidence that in the kingdom, all will be well and they will be reuniting.

With many of these force detachment crisis, particular the ones that come about where I was somehow involved; the crisis itself will have directives coming out of it. This is so that it can turn into a crucifying epiphany. Directives are how the Holy Spirit is involved in this; he is trying to redeem and restore and bringing repentance in order to get people back in alignment with his will. One such directive would be that idolatry has to die. If I have contributed to a crisis through sinful activity, then it has got to die. We want worship of God to be what leads and directs our lives as we are grounded and brought back into a complete reliance on the Living Word and a love for the written word to where it is becoming who we are. If there is a forced detachment crisis, where my idolatry didn't have anything to do with this such as a natural disaster; then there are still directives coming out of this and these are you have to have discernment. You need to ask the Lord what he is doing here. Is the Lord trying to tell you that your physical possessions are not ultimate? If I have lost my house, home and clothing and all of that; am I going to take any of those things to heaven anyway?

Are you showing me things that I have had an inordinate attachment to? Have I been holding on to anything too tightly; my own status in a local church for example? I might think that if I was a good leader, this wouldn't happen. So, these inordinate attachments could involve putting

ultimate meaning in people, events or things. An inordinate attachment is putting too much meaning into something. It is defining yourself in what you drive or by the clothes you wear or by the size of ministry that I lead. If I can inordinately attach to these kinds of things, what is going to happen when those positions change or when other forces change those dynamics? I am not defined by the size of my congregation or my ministry. Both the secular culture and many Christian cultures will tell you the exact opposite. So, I am not defined by the size of the ministry I lead. That doesn't mean that God is against large ministries, for God loves people. Remember though, a large ministry has great pitfalls for the leader. I am not defined by the programs or numbers. Any kind of a crisis that comes in; Jesus reminds us that our ultimate value is found in what Jesus has done for us on the Cross. As the father says that I am as one made in his image and my ultimate meaning is the fact that I am a part of the body of God of which Jesus is the head. At the end of all of this is a big wedding and the whole church is the bride of Christ. The bride is meant to be presented and will be presented pure and spotless to the bridegroom. This is ultimate value and nothing can take that away from us.

God allows these crucifying epiphanies in our lives and sometimes we think that it is going to destroy us. There is going to be no value or meaning in life. What does the crucifying epiphany asks for and called forth? Think about how you have tried to insulate yourself from these crises and even tried to run away from them. Consider how you handled the last crisis you were in. Some of you may be young enough where you haven't faced such a major life crisis yet. God doesn't take everybody through a ringer as such, but to be a human being is to enter into a crisis. Also, to be in the body of Christ is to carry some of that suffering that Christ experienced on the cross. Consider how you have looked at these things in the past. In all of this though, try to get the mind of Christ in you.

CHAPTER 16. CRISIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (PART 2)

To feed the 5,000, the disciples had to rely on Jesus because they didn't have the resources. Jesus walked out on the water to comfort the disciples with his presence. The disciples thought they were going to die a terrible death. If you choose to think your situation, the church and others are hopeless, it results in ego desperation, or hopelessness. You see what's wrong, you think you have exhausted your resources and you see no way that it's going to get fixed. If you allow the crisis to take you into the life of Christ and dependence on him, it will not destroy you.

I. Epiphany

I hope you have considered how the Lord uses this detachment crisis in our lives. This word 'epiphany' in the New Testament in Luke 1:79 is to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. This verb 'to give light' is *epiphaino* or to shine upon, become visible or become known. This is where we get the word epiphany; it reveals the light of Christ. It shines forth the light of Christ. It is to shine on those living in darkness and in the fear of death. That is what Christ came for; to guide us into the path of peace, *eirene*. With this business of crucifying epiphany; what does it look like? Sometimes you need to see living illustrations of what it is. You see this in Psalm 16, David's messianic psalm.

II. Mark 6

A. Feeding the 5,000: Let's look in the Gospel of Mark in Mark 6:30-44 where we see a major miracle unfolding for the apostles. They were part of the miracle of feeding the five thousand. Jesus, of course, is the miracle worker. He was the one who multiplied the loaves and the bread. They were in a deserted place and the disciples were being pressed. The hour is late and they encouraged Jesus to send them away. In verse 37: Jesus tells them to give them food. They think that have no resources in a totally impossible situation. They think that there is nothing they can do about it and so the best solution was to send them away. It was then that Jesus gave them this impossible command, 'you give them something to eat.' Then they ask another rhetorical question regarding buying food for them. The miracle revolves around whose resources are they calling on here. Afterwards, Jesus sends the disciples out in the boat to go to the other side of the shore to Bethsaida. Jesus goes upon the mountain to pray. Mount Herman is a little over forty miles north of them. The mountain is very massive with a series of peaks, just under ten thousand feet. This

mountain area creates its own weather. I had Israeli gunboat captains tell me that the weather can turn quickly and become so bad that you think that you are going to die. There can be twenty foot swells that come up on the lake water.

B. Disciples in the Boat: So these disciples are out in a shadow draft boat about fifteen feet long. The boat was out on the sea and Jesus was on the shore. He saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind. This shouldn't have been a problem for them as they were professional fishermen but the wind had become so strong that it was truly a dangerous situation. I can imagine those in the boat were bailing the water out as quickly as they could. When he saw them out in the boat, he came toward them early in the morning walking on the sea. So, it is a storm and a bad situation but we need to understand that the footsteps of love are firm. It says that he intended to pass by them. This was just saying that he was with them in this storm. One of the most embarrassing words in the New Testament; in seeing him walk on the sea, they thought he was a ghost. In that day and time, there were legends of sea spirits; in other words, demonic forces that would come out in the midst of these terrible storms coming off Mount Herman up north. These disciples had grown up hearing stories about these sea spirits of destruction that would come up from the deep during storms. Their early childhood memories and fears are coming back into play. Their deepest fear here in that they are going to die a terrible death.

C. Example of a Pressure Cooker: My grandmother cooked with a pressure cooker; it was a big pot that you would fill with water and put whatever you wanted to cook in it. You literally screw the lid down with a pressure value on top. In using it, it creates a lot of noise and steam. This helps a person to cook things very quickly. So ministry is largely a pressure cooker, especially if you are a young person. For most people, you grow and learn by making mistakes in any situation. Most people are given a setting where they can make mistakes and mature in a normal way. But in today's sociological understanding, adulthood doesn't really come about until a person is in the mid 30's. This is in North America. The point here, maturity, both physically and mentally; our discerning maturity and decision making ability takes time to come about. Hopefully you are in a setting where people are gracious and allow those kinds of mistakes. Ministry is a little different from that; it is an area where you need to grow up quick and mistakes are costly. In one congregation I served, I prided myself on learning everybody's names. One of the members had a visitor with her and so I thought that it was her mother, but instead it was her sister. So in ministry, screws are tightened around you; it forces you to mature faster and in some ways, I think it is a hard road to go down. So

please don't romanticize Christian ministry for it can be difficult to go through the crisis of critique.

D. Jesus shows up, says, 'it is I,' and tells them to not be Afraid: They all saw him and were terrified. Here, Jesus has compassion on them and immediately spoke to them saying 'take heart, it is I.' God's name, 'I am that I am.' He commanded them not to be afraid. He gets into the boat with them and the wind died down.

E. Significance of the Loaves and Fish: They were astounded for they didn't understand about the loaves, for their hearts were heartened. They had lapsed into vainglory. They thought the thing with the loaves would elevate them, making them mighty people in the eyes of those they were called to serve. They didn't understand the nature of miracles; it wasn't to promote them nor is it to promote us. The nature of miracles is to show the character of God. This is a God who provides even when it seems impossible. Jesus continues to disciple us by way of these times of crisis when we are screaming out as if we are going to die; the Lord Jesus comes and says, 'I am that I am.' I am with you, do not be afraid. This is words of strong language in that day and time. It is a word eliciting response; do not be afraid. Are we flying apart here; some things may be in the process of being crucified. It is only through a collapse or meltdown that we can get to a point of letting go of the fear we have. We hold onto things that we shouldn't be holding onto. God wants to display his glory to us. He wants to show us his nature and he never wastes a good crisis, but we must allow him to speak into our lives. In the midst of a crisis, what is it that we are called to do? We move from whatever has fallen upon us and through whatever crucifying epiphany it is meant to be.

F. 2nd Corinthians 3: If you really want to understand this from-to movement, go with me to 2nd Corinthians 3:16 where it says 'but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.' See the presence; this is the weight of God. It is God's nature being revealed to us. It is the glory of the Lord as if reflected in a mirror. All of us are being transformed into the same image. Know that I am not being transformed into my definition of the good life. If you follow Pauline thought out, the image of Christ, his character and nature and love. My character, my nature and my love is a sheer gift; this sanctification is a gift from God. You don't process your way into this for it is given to you. We are all being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. We are moving and being moved from one degree of glory to another.

IV. At the Crucifying Epiphany, we Experience Fear

A. Unresolved Issues that Surface: When it appears that life is going to tear me apart, there are all sorts of dynamics causing fear. Remember that fear is always tied into a very specific thinking; this storm is going to sink the boat of my life. Or it will bring up all sorts of anxiety making me question whether life is good or God is good; I don't know whether I can trust life, others or whether life is going to be meaningful. All of these things are coming to the surface, both fear and anxiety. What is called for at this point? God doesn't do everything for us; there are a lot of faith decisions along the way. Am I going to trust or am I not going to trust? When I make the decision that God doesn't have my best interest in mind and people basically think that the church is corrupt. How can anything good come out of any of this? There is no righteousness in the land and nobody cares. What happens when I decide this? It will begin to devolve into ego desperation. I should actually use a more biblical language rather than ego which isn't a biblical term. Instead, let's use hopelessness. It is hopeless and devoid of goodness. 'This is the decision I am making. 'This is a very self-centered move. Why? You are looking all around and all you see is what is wrong and you think you have exhausted all of your own resources. There is no way that this situation can be fixed and I don't have any more resources. So this is a profoundly self-curvature in the worst sense that is spinning down with self-deception. It is the spoiled child in me saying that life stinks and I am sick of it. This situation stinks and I just don't want anything else to do with it. So, ego-desperation starts coming and then there is hopelessness, anger sets in and for some it is a very quick step then to end your own life. Why not? It is all meaningless anyway; there is nothing left to move forward with. This can come across as something hard and cruel. In your own ministry, when someone is dealing with this, you need to take both the firmness of the Lord and the compassion of the Lord. In this session, I am only dealing with people who are in ministry now. This is the way that the devil wants to take us so that we can be destroyed, becoming totally ineffective. It is being taken off the playing field of the kingdom.

B. We Are Not Hard-wired for Hopelessness: Let me also suggest that we are not hard-wired for hopelessness. We are not hard-wired to take this kind of move. So, what are we hard-wired for? What is it that he wants us to do? The crucifying epiphany actually calls all of us to a leap of faith. This isn't a leap into nothingness; it isn't a leap that doesn't have an object pole. What is the action required here, that is being called for here. What is the word here? It is called formative abandonment.

C. Formative Abandonment to the Mystery of God: I am using mystery here in a Pauline sense. Yes, this is a word that Paul uses. It means that which was hidden is now revealed to us in

Christ. Formative abandonment to the mystery of God; John Wesley had to do this. He goes to America to be a missionary. He basically writes that he goes to save the heathen and who is going to save me? He ended up leaving America under negative circumstances having to sneak out of the country to return to England. He finds himself in a very difficult day and time in his own life. Then God gets a hold on him, using Moravians to be an instrument to speak into his life where he could abandon his life. Think about all the figures in church history that have gone through major crucifying epiphanies. They heed the call that they are going to surrender and lay my life down moving forward in a way that I don't understand. I want to move forward trusting God that something somehow and somehow is going to do something. There are things that will happen when I take this. I believe from an anthropological viewpoint, when the Lord created us he didn't create us to take a dive down into deep dark depression in excessive agony. I believe he created us to trust him; even though the leap happens when I can't really see; in fact it all seems impossible. But in that leap, I am saying there are resources that I can't see that I don't even understand. I trust that there is something greater than myself at work in this situation.

D. Personal Example: Sometimes illustrations help; it is as if you have to experience something like this. Thirty-eight years ago on this day, my wife and I had a child. So, we are celebrating with that child this day. Earlier, we had one child in 1977 and really felt like the Lord wanted us to have more children. Yet, it seemed to be increasingly difficult to have another child and there was some heart ache in all of this. As was my custom in that day, I got away from the local church and drove to a wilderness area in the southwestern part of the state. There were no cell-phones in that day and time. I was way back in a wilderness area. I woke up one night and I knew that I had to return home. I didn't know why. I was with my wife's uncle and a couple of friends. I left by myself early that next morning and drove a long way to find a phone. I used the phone to call home and talked to my mother-in-law. My wife was in the hospital having been through a fairly serious surgery. He had gone in to see her regular physician with great pain in stomach and was sent home. But later that Saturday night she is in emergency surgery as a result of bleeding out. She had been pregnant and as the baby grew the tube ruptured. I returned home that day. Of course afterwards, we were heart-broken as she could no longer have children after that surgery. One of our dear friends simply said that she thought that God didn't want us to have any more children. Not a very nice thing to say to us at that particular time. Six weeks later, my wife returns to the doctor and I hear someone yelling for the nurse to bring him the chart. Well, there was a baby where it shouldn't be. The doctor had done a DNC which would have taken out any other baby that was

there. Well, my wife had been pregnant with twins. Well, thirty-eight years ago that little girl baby came and she has blessed us today. We have two grand-children now. I think back to the disciples sitting there in the boat on the sea and then God has acted. When I step away and allow him to do whatever he is going to do without trying to control. What does the abandonment do? It says first, I let go and let God do what I can't control. I can't work this out on my own.

E. We Need to Trust God: So I let go and I then trust God. It becomes a literal act of trust. Repentance isn't always going to be involved in this, but if it is, that is going to come as well. I repent for any legitimate way that I have sinfully contributed toward this. Keep in mind, there is truly innocent suffering. A number of times in pastoral ministry, people just love to spread shame around. That is one of the devil's tools. So, I don't repent where I haven't committed sin. I don't have to be caught up in that. I am literally willing to actively wait. I do not believe in passivism in a spiritual sense where I sit back and do nothing. I am actively looking for how Jesus will unfold this, even if I can't see it or don't see it. I am embracing my need for the body of Christ. This drives me toward Christians, toward those I need and who I need in Christ. This is the way of allowing myself to be loved by Christ with real people. I am literally here and not only embracing the trinity but I am allowing the trinity to embrace me.

F. Sometimes Repentance if Necessary: When there involves repentance, does it mean cutting out things of inordinate attachments? Those things I have been holding on too tightly. If I need to let go and then allow to be crucified; I will let go of sinful activity on my part. I do this for his glory because he is calling me to a higher place. These are ways of actively moving forward into this in order to then be open to receive whatever it is that the Lord has for me on the other side of this crisis.

G. Active Waiting: This active waiting also involves a certain sense of patience which is based on confidence. Going back to Psalm 16, we see how that Psalm progresses and what it has to say for us today. After crying out to the Lord and after affirming that the saints in the land are noble. In verse 4, it reads that after also affirming that those who choose another god, simply multiply their sorrows. Then it says that the Lord is my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. It is saying that Lord, you provide everything that I need. I choose to accept what you give; how you providentially care for my life. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. I grew up in a land of barbed wire fences to hold cattle in and I spent many days riding along those fences in a four wheeled drive or riding on a horse. This is an old man looking back on that fence and sees that everywhere the Lord has led, it is good. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

You have got everything needful for me; you hold my lot. All that I am and all that I have and will ever be; those things are all in your hands. The psalm continues by saying, 'I bless the Lord;' the idea of worship. 'Who gives me counsel in the night and also my heart instructs me. 'I keep the Lord always before me.' You see the wandering eye in Psalm 36:1. There is no fear of God in his eyes. It is the evil eye that is always out scanning the horizon, trying to find something that will bring meaning into life. It is that divided heart; it is always trying to grab something to fill the void. No, I keep the Lord always before me. His reference is set. 'Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices and my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, the land of death. What happened with Christ after 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon, on the day he died? What did Peter say that happened? Where did his spirit go? We are talking about classic understanding of Christian theology. He goes and preaches in the land of the dead. He goes to Satan's dominion and at that point when Satan thought that he had him, it became the greatest upset in world history. Death did not have him. The dead start arising and appeared to the apostles in Jerusalem. He broke the chains of death. This psalm is perfect for the crucifying epiphanies. Death was not the final word. What is more impossible than a dead person? This is why we are Easter people and he rose bodily from the dead. So how does it end?

H. Letting Go of Inordinate Desires: You show me the path, not of death and not of destruction. You show me the path of life because it was one for us in the life suffering death burial and resurrection and ascension of Christ. You show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy. In your right hand are pleasures forever more. This is where this leads us. May my heart be firm in confidence that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ grants to all of his children. This crisis will not destroy you; it will take you into the psalms and life of Christ.

CHAPTER 17. CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY (PART 1)

It's important for us to understand how our relationship with God is affected by being born at a certain period of time and in a certain society. The vital is the physical dimension of the human life. Vitalism is where your physical pleasures become the priority in your life. Functional is the roles, tasks and responsibilities we take on. It's a problem when we allow our roles and responsibilities to define us, which is functionalism. Transcendent is the longing for the "more than." Pneumatic/Ecclesial level is the capacity the Lord has given each of us to hear and respond to the Holy Spirit, God's voice. When ambition gets separated from the leading of the Spirit, it can become self-promotion. Functional Transcendence is you using the things of God for self-gain.

I. Socio-historical

A. Formative Spirituality: I want to now discuss issues that are largely absent from the church today. It is important to understand who the Lord made us to be. We simply do not have a Christian anthropology. Yet, it is the Lord who has fearfully and wondrously made us. It is the Lord who has made us in his image, giving us all sorts of reflections in our own life of who he is and how he intended us to be. We just don't give a whole lot of attention in the church today to understand what it means to be made in the image of God. This is the largest of God's redemption in our lives that moves me to speak into this. I want to recommend a text called 'Understanding Our Story' by Adrian van Com in the field of Formative Spirituality. This was co-authored by Rebecca Letterman who teaches Spiritual Formation at Northeastern Seminary in Rochester. She is a Wesleyan scholar. It is also by Susan Muto who was one of my mentor's and professors in graduate school. Susan is the head of the epiphany association in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

I think this is important and I want to share some quotes with you on this. First, I want to start out by looking at a basic outline that will help us to jump in to understanding some Christian Anthropology that all of us can grasp. We will look at van Com's dimensions first, human life dimensions. In looking at the beauty of any person that has been created in the image of God, there are layers of depth to this. It is something that has all sorts of meanings in areas in which God works in our lives. We will not slice the human person into little areas in order to study one area or qualify or quantify any particular area. We are not going to do that. The human person is a whole. Just as you look at a diamond and see different reflections, the diamond still remains a whole. So let's see how the Lord's redemption seeks to work throughout the whole of who we are. Let's start by

looking at what it means to be a person who was born at a certain historical moment in redemption history and what it means to be born into a certain society. As an example, I was born in the western most part of the State of Texas. I was a 5th generation Methodist Christian which means that I come from that kind of influence and theological background. The area of that part of Texas is very dry and arid. This promotes a sense of rugged independence; where you are taught to be self-sufficient in order to live independently. These can be very good things, but it also promotes a false idea that you can control the elements as long as you work hard and depend on the best that you are. I was born into a family that happened to have very strong political opinions. Both of my grandfathers were military along with my father who fought in World War II. One grandfather fought in World War I while the other fought all through World War II. These things influence and shape you. I grew up in a time where there were good people and there were enemies of America. All of these things influenced our thinking and the values we held. I was given both formative and deformative values.

B. Deformative Spirituality: When I was growing up, sadly sociologically historically there promoted two sets of rest-rooms in the town. One set for white people only and another set for everybody else. When I was growing up, I went to an all-white integrated school. I was there when forced integration came in. In growing up you develop prejudice. I grew up with solid family values and some not so solid family values. There are good things that we are thankful for that are formative and there are some negative things that we are not thankful for that are deformative. This happens to all of us in our backgrounds. We were what would be called rabbit Dallas Cowboy fans. This is an American Football team. Our arch enemies were the Pittsburg Stealers. When I went to graduate school, I went to Pittsburg to study. I was actually an associate pastor in a church there where there were Pittsburg Stealer players in the congregation. I performed a wedding and was given tickets to attend a football game there. Well, we really loved western Pennsylvania. There are friendly people everywhere, both in western Texas and in western Pennsylvania. This area left us with some good solid values, Christian values that were perhaps implanted early. But, this whole socio-historic thing can give us some non-Christian values as well. It can set people against people that the Lord never wanted to happen. It can fill us with prejudice. When we are dealing with people and leading and shepherding people, we must go beyond any kind of populace understanding, or ghetto understanding. Often, people are given values that are simply not right. They are wrong and end up oppressing others.

II. Vital

The vital is the whole physical dimension of the human life. The Lord created us as physical people; we are incarnated souls and given time in space and placed in a certain region. This is good and right; even the incarnation of Jesus who comes down as both fully God and fully human. He takes on human flesh incarnation. He is born to a virgin; he comes into the world with a real physical body and was in a real place and actual time. He steps into our world with all the limits that he was willing to take on; he descends into our world. The Lord is the creator of the body; so the body is good and a blessing to us. How else could we be about his work; how else could we enter into ministry for him without being an actual physical person? The physical dimension allows us to move and have our being. We have sense and perception and to be the hands and feet and voice of Christ. These are right and good. The problem is that the whole vital dimension can readily devolve or degenerate into what could be called vitalism. This is where I would make this part of my life preeminent. What really counts here are the physical experiences that I am able to accumulate or the pleasures and what can happen is that this thing can really degenerate into sheer heathenism. This means that I began to live for physical pleasure. If you go in that direction, you will not want to consider restraining physical appetites. The end all and be all is not you having pleasure, though the Lord is the author of pleasure. It is when it comes primarily about pleasure; that is heathenistic. That is not what we were ultimately created for. Van Com holds that these dimensions are hierarchical.

III. Functional

Now, a key issue for us as we go to the next dimension which is functional; this is like the executive side of who we are. This is the roles we are called to take on; the tasks and responsibilities. The disciples were sent during the holy week and they were given a task to find the person with a donkey and then get the upper room. We are given roles and tasks to do. For those of you who are in pastoral leadership, you have been given a specific role, either as a pastor or a minister or whatever area you are called to function in. All of us have to have specific roles in which we are called to function. The real issue here in terms of where this can go; if we allow our roles and our tasks and our responsibilities to define us. When my value is defined by what I do, then we are lowered into functionalism. I am not saying that roles and responsibilities are bad; not at all as they are very important. It is when I am defined by what I produce or by the title I carry. What happens if that is taken away from me? What happens when this expands and begins to lead everything else? In other words, life begins to wrap around the specific job responsibility. All of life becomes

oriented by what I produce or don't produce or what I manage or don't manage. My self-worth is shown by certain things and if they are not in place then I am not of much worth. So, functionalism today is a fairly serious issue. Why is it in not all parts of the world except in Asia and North America, people are working more and more hours, huge numbers of hours with a less and less sense of true fulfillment in life. The Lord has also put a longing in us for the more than. What is this more than? This is what we call prevenient grace; it is that longing and urgency that your life isn't fulfilled. I sense vacancy and a lack of fulfillment. This can really go down quickly; this happens when there is a long for that more than is mistaken. I need more of this and that, etc. If I had a bigger house, I would feel fulfilled or whatever that is bigger.

IV. Transcendent

Even worse, the sense of longing will start playing itself, thinking that you need something different in your life, even thinking that you need a different husband or wife. Just because we have this longing for the more than, doesn't take away the fact that this thing can be readily stopped. It can fall apart quickly. By trying to fill that vacuum with something that is never going to fulfill anything. What it is meant to move us to be in dynamic ongoing relationship with our Lord. That is the ultimate purpose of this. This is why when you are dealing with people who are board, restless and longing; this is what is happening. In considering the strong pressure that is inside of us to get more at a physical level or financial level; is that why it is idolatry? God has given us a strong desire of himself and so if that strong desire doesn't go to him, is that what is pushing us so hard to get more. Yes, this is true. Once this path is taken, it will never bring ultimate satisfaction.

V. Pneumatic/Ecclesial

When we talk about the pneumatic ecclesial level; this is the capacity that the Lord has given each of us to both hear and respond to the Holy Spirit. I can hear the invitation of God; I can sense and understand on how God is seeking to build and work through his church, the body of Christ. Pneumatic is simply the realm where the Holy Spirit speaks to my spirit and it isn't just a matter of hearing. I cannot only hear the word but I can obey the word. In Van Com's understanding, he is simply talking about the Lord speaking in and through the church. This is classical Roman Catholic understanding of who we are. I'm okay with that because the Holy Spirit is the one doing the work and I believe that I can be obedient to the Holy Spirit and in the way that he wants to body of Christ to walk in. This is the body of Christ being obedient as a body to the Lord.

VI. Dynamics and Expressions

I now want to refer to a chart that says that every level of this dimension has both dynamics and also expressions. For example, take a radio and go through the different channels or TV channels, you have people speaking into your life. Sometimes, this is something you need to hear and many times it is something you want to hear. There are people who are trying to sell us something or trying to pressure us into a certain way of living. A classic example for me; there is a certain program that I run on my computer that tries to correct grammar within my written documents. Of course, that program isn't always correct. It is set up to follow certain standards that don't necessarily fit to what I want. There is continual pressure to follow that programming. In thinking about dynamics; it is the directive that are coming out and when you think about expressions, it is how it would be played out.

A. Socio-Historical – In terms of dynamic, there are pulsations coming from society. It is saying that this is how you need to live and act and think. For example, I didn't have a cell phone until 1999 and life was good without it. I didn't worry about it. When I became the pastor of a certain church, I was handed a cell phone. It is a good tool that can be used effectively but the pulsation that comes out; if you are really cool, you are going to have a cell-phone. Now, you see small kids with cell-phones. It works itself into the society that this is what everybody does. This is what everybody thinks and is the proper way of moving. This can be both good and also very negative. This business with nationalism can work its way in to where the selfish interest of one group of people trumps the whole human rights of anybody else. Pulsations might include the way you wear your hair or the type of clothes you wear and even colors of clothes you wear. This is culture seeking to set trends. It then works itself out into pressuring people within that culture to conform.

B. Vital – The vital puts out physical pulsations. I am hungry and I need to eat. Is there anything wrong with that? No, of course not, unless I allow that hunger to become my focal point in my life; my eating becomes more important than anything else in my life. This works itself out through impulses and compulsions that we experience from our physical body. Impulses can put a priority on eating immediately. The compulsion is being an additive to something. I have to have this much at this time; it has to be on demand and then chains starts setting in.

C. Ambitions - How does the functional work itself out? It changes into ambitions of which I don't think is wrong. It is probably a neutral term; the Lord puts desires into our heart to

serve him in certain ways and to see. He puts dreams and visions into our hearts. So an ambition, in or of itself is not necessarily wrong. An ambition will work itself out into projects. This is how I am going to work this out. One ambition that I have always had is to learn Biblical Greek. You might have the ambition to serve the Lord as a pastor if that is a true vocational calling. You might have the ambition to organize a mission group or to take on a big mission outreach. All of this can be good, except when it gets disconnected from the directives of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. So, ambitions can be all about self-promotion; that is when it degenerates. It is all about self-promotion and projects can then be all about bringing in the kingdom according to me. In other words, I am building life around my project and my vision without reference to God. This is when this whole functional aspect of things collapses. There are a lot of projects coming from a lot of ambitious people. It is all cloaked under mercy and religious garb. What I am doing; is it for God's kingdom or my kingdom?

D. Transcendent – We have both aspirations and a longing for a transcendent ideal in your life, often resulting in a vision for a way to relate to others. But, the Lord does give us visions; he does call us to the more than and enables us to see needs in his body. He gives us this deep aspiring move, this urge to see this thing addressed in whatever it is.

E. Pneumatic/Ecclesial - Finally, when you look upon the pneumatic/ecclesial level, what does the Holy Spirit do? He is always going to point to Christ. He is always going to send inspirations that are going to work itself out into an expression of an invitation. A lot of time in dealing with my students, I try to move them away from this driving sense of thinking that they have to do this or that, particularly when they are trying to get disciplines in place and when they feel that they have been defeated by a number of things. When you talk or think this way, you return to the functional level. In the Christian life we have to realize that our running and willing are never enough. I can't fulfill the law! Then, what is enough? What is coming is an invitation from the Holy Spirit. What is the Living Word who is Christ? How is he inviting you now to respond in faith, hope and love? It changes the subject; it is not what I must do but it is what he is inviting in me to respond to do. It takes it away from others trying to impose on someone making them to consider what the actual discernment is; how is the Holy Spirit inspiring you and what is he saying to you? What is the invitation in terms of solid intent of following Christ?

F. Functional Transcendence: I want to add a couple of more dynamics here that are going to speak to our culture. There is a great danger in when we lapse into an area called functional transcendence. Adrian Van Com spoke to me in the 1980's saying that the greatest danger before the

church is when God becomes subservient to us because we view his purpose as making us more successful. We have an explosion of knowledge taking place in all of the human life sciences. We have this in the medical sciences of keeping people alive and well over a longer period of time. We thank the Lord for every genuine discovery. But the danger is that we are pulled down in this longing that we have for God and even we will pull down some of the real insights that God gives us about what it means to be a human being. But we will keep it mainly on the functional level so that we will function better. What is wrong with functioning better and well? Nothing! You pray that people are competent in whatever they do. In terms of competence, you are called to handle well the things of God. If God has given you a chore, a ministry, a teaching, being an administrator; whatever job he has given you, God wants you to be competent in that work. There is nothing wrong with fulfilling the functional tasks and responsibilities that we have been given. When we do that, people will be blessed. Why is this dangerous to the church? It is because God becomes subservient to us. God is there to make me a more successful person. It is the wrong hierarchy. It puts me at the top and me using the things of God for self-gain. I am not talking about being incompetent. It is not about me having the whole world and increasing my influence. It is not about me increasing my level of wealth. It is not about me. I have to pull me out of the subject of the sentence. A lot of people are getting this wrong these days. So, what are we after then or what is the way that Christ would have us to go?

G. Transcendent Functional Life - It cannot be functional transcendence where I am using God to get ahead in life. Instead, I am called to live a transcendent functional life. It is when the values of Christ as revealed in the Bible determine how you function in your life. It is where it is lived out in the blessedness of the body of Christ. The values of Christ determine and set the values of my functional life and world. It is a matter of who is the subject of the sentence; it is who sets the agenda and who leads the whole movement of my life. We don't need more people moving into ambitious ego projects in the church. Eventually, all of that ends up doing is imploding; it just collapses and people get wiped out in ministry. Normally when you get wiped out in ministry, it is like a train wreck and it takes a lot of people along with it; a lot of people can be injured. We need women and men who are filled with God's spirit and who are subservient to God's Word and who truly loves God's church and place themselves as servants within that church. They listen and hear in order to fulfill whatever role and responsibilities and tasks the Lord gives them. This is a huge issue for the body of Christ. All of this is talking about is how we concretize life in the Holy Spirit? What does real life look like for us today? What does it look like as a member of society? How do I

function as a responsible member of society and what does that look like in my own physical life?

H. What Should Your Life Look like today – How do I reflect the glory of God and avoid using God in a selfish way. How do I let the longing of my own heart be grounded in the true plan that God has for my own life. It all has to be subservient to the Word of God. That is part of the reason we have to stay in the Word. The Word can't be casual; it is not a matter of one hour on Sunday morning. How are we listening and responding to those invitations by the Holy Spirit? I recommend this text for you which is very readable.

I think on how this is going to think about in my pastoring. From my own experience, you spend so much time focusing on the functional and almost pay lip service to the transcendent; to the urgent, to the weeping person on the phone and in the board meetings. There is so much in a pastor's life that says function. What then happens, we stop being fed by the transcendent. It is like we draw a dotted line across it and say if I can get above to those top categories is good. But most of my time is down below. What I understand from this discussion; we function in these five different levels but we have to start at the top. From there, it slowly goes down and then realizes that each of these lines in your chart is affecting us at different times in our lives. But it has to transcend first; it has to be our inner life, our spiritual life. I remember a talk I heard John Piper give once; he was asking about priorities and what is important and pastors were listed those out. He commented and asked where God was in all this? That was taken for granted, but God doesn't like to be taken for granted. So many of us are in the middle of that chart and we are supposed to start at the top. It all starts in the life of God and in his purpose for his church. My field research along with others reveal that a huge amount is being taken for granted, but is in fact just absent. We have got to recover first things first. All of this has to bow in submission.

CHAPTER 18. CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY (PART 2)

It's important to keep Christ at the center of who you are. Interiority includes memory, intellect, will.

Augustine says will is most important. In addition to our personal thoughts, we exist in community with others who are submitting their lives to the will of Christ. The Lord has placed us in a certain place and time and wants you to live a life of obedience in that context every day, not just one day a week. The Father is seeking to form your life into the image of Christ as you were meant to be. Through our experiences, God forms you into a unique person. On the relational side, this results in compassion for others because we love others with the same love we experienced. God gives us confidence that he has given us the gifts and resources we need to live out the calling he has given us. Competence that our ministry will be effective. Our courage comes from trusting in the strength of the Lord. Community, the work of God's Church is a work done with others. Confirmation comes internally from God and externally from the community of faith.

I. Field Theory

I want to continue in our study of Christian Anthropology. This may be a new area that you have ventured into and also Van Com isn't the only person who felt that Christian Anthropology was important. Dallas Willard spent a lot of time and energy working on this area. I have found it to be very helpful in my own ministry and understanding. These are like metrics that I have in my own mind and in my own heart when I am ministering to people and when I am speaking. First, I want to look at Von Com's field Theory. This was inspired by his ventures into quantum physics, understanding that there is a whole field of energy in the physical universe; things that spin around other things and how those things are connected with each other. I am not talking within a spiritualistic standpoint here. I am talking about actual quantum physics. Let's see how this relates in helping people to keep Christ at the center of who they are and to connect all these things back into this amazing focus and reality of the one who holds all things together. I want to point you to the text of understanding in our story which is Christian Anthropology by Rebecca Letterman and Susan Muto. They put up a field model that put the center in place so that all things are going to be held together in this center. This is the divine forming and preforming mystery.

A. Mystery of God as Revealed Through Christ: This is simply the revelation of Christ as revealed in and through the incarnation of Christ and the Word that has been given to us. This is the middle of this field theory where all things come not only out from Christ but will return to him. We

start out then with our interior life associated by four poles. This interior life includes memory, intellect, and will; all of these things unfold at any moment in our interior life. This interior life is the area where we receive and give form to our personal directives, thoughts, feelings, modes and decisions; there is a whole sphere of the human life that is unfolding around our own thoughts, feelings, modes, directions, etc. So Von Com conceived of the human heart which he terms the core form as being a relatively stable configuration of character disposition. This is where all these disciplines that I have built up, the disposition to be kind and loving and thoughtful, to grow and to learn and to be compassionate. All of these things are a part of unique gift that makes you who you are. It is called the intra-sphere or your own interior life.

B. Your Interior Life: The most important thing here, according to Augustin is our will. It is the decision making process. So by orientation of will; it is openness to that transcendent meaning of life. We are open to the invitation that is coming from the Holy Spirit to form our lives in a certain way. All of that is processed there. Then a major component of every human life; is anyone born in isolation? Does anybody live a singular life? This is not what the Lord designed us for.

C. Your Relational Life: My life is not merely caught up in my own thoughts and feelings, even though sometimes feels like it is; I am also part of a community. Just think about this as being family, friends, co-workers; I live in relationship at various levels with a whole lot of people. Even my life in relationship with others in the church; the inter-relatedness of life is huge. It is not just a vertical thing with me and God; there is always a horizontal aspect of who we are. It is the body of Christ as well. The minute I submit my life to the Lordship of Christ, it is the minute that I am placed in communion with everyone else who submits their life to the Lordship of Christ. Historically, the church is called the communion of the saints. That communion is both with the saints in heaven; these are triumphant saints as well as the saints on earth. We are part of that same body as we submit our lives to the will of Christ.

D. You're here and Now Life: There are two other poles, one that is critical which we tend to eliminate; it is our here and now life. This is the situational pole; our here and now life. The Lord has a place for me in a certain time and situation and he wants me to unfold a life of obedience to him in this certain place and time. If you are a student, then this is where he has called you to be. He has called you to that place, a school, giving your best for the Lord even as you stay in a relationship with others. This is where the work of your life is to unfold. You have to think in terms of every day. When Christianity is only thought about and practiced on one day, you do not have true Christianity. This is our everyday life where we are seeking to unfold infidelity to how and where

Christ has placed us. Another pole involves being global citizens.

E. You are a Global Citizen: This top pole is our global life. I am not here just necessarily to serve one particular area, also in practicality that is how it works itself out. But even my service of love in one particular place in the truest since of the word can and will have global implications. It is the sphere of the world. We are not called to live in isolation and insolation. What you do today may have impact on others anywhere in the world. Think in terms of the largeness of salvation; it is meant for all people and for us to see ourselves as having the potential of reflecting his love to all people.

II. Implications of the Field Theory in Your Daily Life

What does this mean in our everyday life and seeking to live an obedient life that is connected with the Lord? Let's look at the center of all it is in terms of the mystery of the Trinity. At the center of this, we have nothing less than adoration and awe; where you see Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father loves the Son and the Father pours his life out into the Son and the Son responds to that love and returns that Love to the Father. The bond between them is so incredibly strong; it is the kiss of peace between the Father and Son. The three in one is at the center of all that it is; Father, Son and Holy Spirit are giving form to all that is. This is what Von Com meant when he talked about the divine forming mystery of God. The Father is seeking to form your life into the image of Christ that you were meant to be. What if in the uniqueness that you are and created to be and when you get into heaven, you are actually going to instruct the rest of the heavenly host about a particular aspect of the nature of God. This is the whole body of Christ; each member of the body of Christ, all reflecting that image. God is seeking to grow us into maturity and that maturity is in the body of Christ. This is in order to find and know our place and to live our place.

It is going to be who he has created us to be. This is the symphony that the Lord has invited me to be part of. He is the director and I have an instrument to play. And through his grace in my own interiority, I'm learning how to do that. All of those crises and all that which we have been talking about can unfold into a deep sense of knowing what you were created to do. This is who he wants me and how he wants me to reflect his glory. These are the notes of the song that he wants me to sing. On the relational side, what begins to unfold is a true sense of loving compassion for others. That sense of loving others with the same God like love that I have received. And in regards to where he specifically placed me, what begins to unfold is a genuine and humble sense of confidence. The confidence that I can step into what he has called me to be. Whatever that is, I will

be able to handle the things of God; there is no arrogance in this. There is a sense that I can do whatever he wants me to do. I have a confidence in knowing I am where I am supposed to be. In like manner where I am called to impact the world for his sake, then there is this sense of competence.

This is having confidence in the good work of God which results in confidence in the expression that I share with others; the ministry that I am doing with others. These things are going to be marked by courage. We become Psalm 27 people; we are taking the strength of the Lord and the courage of the Lord. These things will always be marked by community. These works of God's church is a work done with others in Christ as well. I am called to lead out of singularity, but instead I'm called to lead as a team, to be a member of a team and the body of Christ where I am loving others. There is also a sense of cooperation, loving cooperation and even deep hospitality where I am learning to work with others. Not just in a compassionate way but to work well with them; to learn how to work as a team. Then over here, I think what we are going to see unfold between our immediate situated place and our own interiority; we will have a sense of confirmation.

Confirmation is in an interior sense where the Lord is really at work in your life. The community will affirm this. It is so important for us to be Barnabas people; people who love and encourage others and seek to move them through our encouragement into the competence that Christ has for them. There is a balance through all of this definitely on the personal side. We need to see the firmness of Christ at place. When I am given a task, I am called to stay with it, not to be divided in so many directions. All firmness makes for a very mean person, not a fun person to be around. On the relational side, I am called to carry that delicate balance of gentleness. So gentleness is basically having mercy in regards to those others who have also fallen. There must be firmness and gentleness. If you fall off too far on the gentle side, then you will not be able to speak any kind of a corrective word or directing word into somebody. In the long run, this isn't necessarily helpful. If you are too heavy on the firm side of things, you will come across as being overbearing and hard to get along with and nobody will want to be around you. There must be a sweet and delicate balance in regards to firmness and gentleness.

III. Conclusion

So what is this saying to me? I am bringing every aspect of my life into the same adoration and awe that is happening in the trinity. I am bringing everything into submission to Christ. I am taking the courage of the Lord; I am living in community. I am seeking to genuinely get along with

others. I am both offering confirmation for others and I am receiving confirmation from others. Then these things begin to work in harmony together. The early church loved the word of harmoniously sounding together of all the parts. This makes for happiness, holiness and happiness. These two always go hand in hand and may these be a reality in your life.

You have to look at each of the four corners and ask yourself whether this is in balance in my life. Am I doing nothing but working on my competence, but I don't have any compassion for people. Different pastors will have different sets of gifts that will allow them to be stronger in one area or another. But we all need to have that balance. If I am spending all of my time with people; we are called to love people and to spend time with people. Jesus spent a lot of time with people. If I am spending the vast majority of my time with people to the exclusion of having interiority time where I am alone out on the hillside with the Father in prayer then that isn't in balance. Am I so caught up in the functional side of where I am situated that I neglect my own family, etc.

You mentioned cooperation relating to people; I see it as cooperating with the Holy Spirit in how he is trying to intervene in my life to bring the balance to cooperate as well as relationally with people. That is ultimately what we want to do; we want to be side by side with others cooperating with the Holy Spirit. This is how the Holy Spirit wants us to go and in our work with people when you are finding yourself pressing against people as a disposition, you are always having to come against. When there is no cooperation, you are always pressing. Who wants to work with a person like that? And if you are always getting away from people, you don't want to take a chance of any kind of conflict. Or, you are trying always to meld with somebody. There are times when I need to come against and there are times when I need to get away and times when I need to meld, but not dispositional. We need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit; how do you want this situation to unfold.

CHAPTER 19. LEADERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

If you are following Jesus, you have a role as a leader. If a spiritual leader does not understand what their task is according to scripture, then their spiritual life is not going to have the focus the Lord wants them to have. Worship is a response of the love that has been shown to us. Worship involves our all aspects of us and is enabled by God's Spirit. We worship God because of who he is. By looking at Jesus, you see who God is.

I. Who is a Leader?

So, who is a leader? Well, anybody following Jesus is called to be a leader for his kingdom. Anyone following our Lord is going to be placed by the Lord himself. That placement is always synonymous with service in the kingdom. Six or seven years back, I felt that the Lord wanted me to invest whatever days left for me in discipleship, which isn't being taken seriously in these days. There were others at Asberry Seminary who had the same calling; then about five years ago, I approached one of my colleagues to help me in this. Brian and I set out globally doing interviews within different denominations. We didn't get very far into this before realizing that there was a major issue facing God's church today. The Spiritual leaders of the church could not articulate a Biblical job description. What we were finding there was no clear understanding of what the Word of God had to say about leadership in this local congregation. There was an alarming lack of understanding of the mileposts and issues that we are to be about. This is important because if a spiritual leader doesn't understand what their tasks is according to Scripture, then their spiritual life is not going to have the focus that Jesus wants it to have. Without that focus, spiritual leaders then tend to be like the river in northwest Texas which was the Red River. At best during leadership that river might be a stream of water; it is characterized by being spread out and very shallow. So, you don't have that vocational clarity that I spoke about earlier. So, we have talked about Anthropology, understanding who we are: the human person. Now I want to turn to ecclesiology; this is simply, the church. What does God want his church to be about?

II. What Did Jesus Say was the Most Important thing?

This is a question that my colleagues Brian Simms often ask different groups of people he has worked with. If you look in Matthew 22:37-40, you will read that Jesus said to them, you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart and soul and mind. This is the greatest and first commandment and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the rest of the law and the prophets. This business between worshipping

God and loving God or loving God as the commandment says and worshipping God starts to converge at this point. Worship our God and everything that we are and about wrap around this idea of worship.

III. What Comes to Your Mind When You Think of Worship?

So what comes to your mind when you think of worship? It is singing and declaring God's Word. Many of the common answers include a particular style of music. Some People say that there will be certain liturgy and other particular things that we do; there will be many different things. For some, people want a high energy service and worship time, a high impact worship where they come out really charged, feeling like they have been moved. Others tie worship with going to a physical building during the week. But worship has to be something more than attending a service now and then or having a spiritual feeling. There is more involved in this than with even meeting other people, although that is important. How do you start to live the great invitation that we find throughout the Psalms and Scripture to worship God? How do we live into that? God is seeking people to worship him in Spirit and in truth in John 4:24. That Father is seeking people who will worship him in Spirit and in true. This type of worship, this invitation to worship implies that there is a dimension of reality called the Kingdom of God. There is a dimension of reality that doesn't contain any distortion of God, whatsoever in heaven. There is no distortion or any deception regarding the good, there is no fake news in heaven, none whatsoever. The very first words of Jesus' earthly ministry were for us to turn away from anything that was false. In Matthew 4:17 he says to repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near. This is a kingdom that is ruled by God's righteousness, by his peace, by God's justice. And in the domain of heaven there is no shadow of deception, no turning of doubt, and no tarnish of falsehood whatsoever. In Luke 17:21, Jesus said that this very kingdom is among you. God's dimension intersects with us in this dimension now. It permeates the whole world including every human life. So, it isn't surprising that the Lord calls us to repent from anything that separates us from this kingdom. This invitation reverberates in our lives. It is deep calling to be deep here; a literal transcendent longing, the true nature of this is to worship the Lord our God.

IV Worship Does Not Start With Me?

Does worship start with me? Let me share an emphatic word here. No, it doesn't. Worship is a response. We are responding to the love that has been shown to us through Christ. We are

responding to that love; we are returning that love. In Roman 12:1, this kind of spiritual worship is a worship with all that we are, body, soul and mind and strength. It is spiritual in that it is enabled by God's Holy Spirit. It is truth in that it is founded upon and made possible by the work of Christ. If the most important thing in life is to love the Lord with all that we are, it goes hand in hand with worshipping God and giving him glory. A key question to help us solidify our leadership is why we worship; why is it so important for leaders to understand this. We, first of all, worship because of who God is. The New Testament uses this word, Emanuel, God among us. Jesus reveals in his own-self the very divine nature of love and commitment and sacrifice and power and redemption. In the light of Christ, we behold who God is. It is to see Jesus and to see the Father. Our greatest response to all of this and to all of his magnitude is to join with his disciples in Luke 24:52. This is to worship him and love him. Our first and primary purpose as leaders in his church is to offer God praise and adoration. We are to be people of prayer and praise and adoration of worship and to lead the people of God. This is much bigger than just attending church on a Sunday morning and so it is critical to understand this. Jesus said that we are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him in Matthew 4:10. This kind of single minded focus sets our direction and orders our priorities as leaders around one object. That object is of course, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then, the objective is loving the Lord our God with all that we are and worshipping him alone and bringing the people we shepherd into this. If you don't do this, you will have cracks in your leadership. You start wondering and given the critical nature of our world today that we really have the luxury of not understanding primary foundational orders.

We are seeing a large amount of apathy in God's church. This isn't true everywhere. I have been greatly blessed in places where we have travelled to and studied. You can't go to Tim Keller's church in New York City and not see focus there. In talking to them, they know why they are there. There is great blessing to his life and work and there are others. Yet, in the majority of places where we have been, we find a striking sense of apathy. John Stott, a great man of the Anglican church who is now in glory with the saints now. He wrote about this and this is what he said, the church is not always conspicuous for the profound reality of its worship. He was recognizing that we have a problem. In particular, we who call ourselves evangelical do not know how to worship. Stott wrote that evangelism is our specialty, not worship. We seem to have little sense of the greatness in glory of God. We do not kneel down before him in awe and wonder. It has taken me a long time to get these things straight in my own mind. I think it took Stott a while also. My heart in all of this is especially for you younger leaders. You don't have to be an old man to get this thing straight. It is all

going to come out in the Word.

V. Worship is Essential

God discloses his character to us in the book of his revelation where he is revealing to us who he is in his Word. The Bible shows us his nature and power in creation. All you have to do is look around and you are in awe of what he has done around us. He talks to us in our own lives. Even before becoming a Christian, the Holy Spirit is knocking on the door, taking to you. He is inviting you in and he speaks to us through the events in our lives. As a leader, let us start drilling down and dwelling in God's Word. If we are going to understand worship, we will need to drill down and dwell in God's Word. This will have to be above and beyond but including going to the Word for the functional purpose of preaching and teaching. It will need to go beyond that. John Wesley was very insistent that the church stayed in Scriptural Christianity. We don't have the right to rewrite or revise the Scriptures. We don't have the right to go in and toss out what contemporary culture doesn't like. You lose everything by doing this, your worship and your grounding. John Wesley understood the church to consist of one body, of one Spirit, the Holy Spirit and one Lord and one faith. This is the Gospel that has been handed down to us. That is the Word that has been given to us. There is one baptism and one God and Father of all; that is the true church. He stood in agreement with the 19th article of the Church of England which stated that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached with the sacraments being ministered. I want to emphasize that worship is very much tied with God's Word and it is celebrating God's presence in our lives through Holy Communion. This is a part of who we are. We sing the psalms and pray the psalms and worship God through these prayers. We are instructed by the teaching of both the Old and New Testament.

Secondly, why do we worship God? First, we worship because he has been revealed to us in his Word. Secondly we worship because he is revealed to us in nature. There is an old hymn: *This is My Father's World*, a lovely old hymn. The early church would talk about nature being the second book of God. The Bible is the first book; we should always keep that in mind. Nature is the second book that speaks to us and affirms that the Lord is good and he has created all that there is and he is bringing all there is into glory. Thirdly, we worship because God reveals his life and love in our own being. What is the crowning glory of God's handiwork? We see this in Genesis 1:27, we are! He is our author; he is our creator and our God. He created us to reflex his goodness and his glory. This is called being made in the image of God. We affirm and we are very clear that because of the fall, that image was completely covered over. Classic historical Christianity speaks in terms of total depravity.

There is no area of your life that is not impacted by the fall; but in Christ and the redemption which that offers, we become redeemed and that image comes back. Wesley said that before the fall, Adam and Eve saw everything was created as God saw it. They had knowledge and wisdom and understood the purpose of things. That was why they were able to name it; to name it is to understand the nature of it.

Their hearts had one primary object of love and adoration and they had a perfect will. They enjoyed freedom to order their lives and work as they saw best. They were happy and had joy in their lives. We affirm today that happiness and holiness always go hand in hand. All of that was lost because of sin that was introduced through an action. But God's redeeming love is coming in order to redeem that which was lost and fallen and broken. The image of God in our lives can be fully restored in the new birth. This is what Jesus makes possible. So, we are thankful; we can worship because of how God is made known in our own lives. We sense his presence because we are near to him and close to him. We are blessed by him and then we worship God because of the arrangement of our lives. Look at the divine providence in your life. Most people that I am speaking to, have experienced a major crisis in their lives. Crisis is not so much the point, for beyond the crises you say blessed crises. You come to the point to realize that through divine providence there is nothing that keeps us away from God's love and his purpose being fulfilled and unfolding in our lives. Thomas Oden, a great theologian, who is also with the saints in glory. He wrote if God exists in the way that classic Christianity teaches, his existence implies far more than intellectual consent. It implies befitting adoration; ceaseless praise of his incomparable being and active love of the most lovable of all beings. This is a love that manifests itself in the loving of all other beings in relation of this Supreme Being. Our duty of worship God becomes our joy and it also sets the compass of our lives. This business of worship is immense.

CHAPTER 20. BIBLICAL WORSHIP

The Church needs you to present what Scripture says, not your own ideas. Worship means to kneel before someone out of respect or honor. We owe it to God as an act of service to sit at his feet and worship him. Spiritual worship is to place our physical bodies at God's disposal. Are we leading people to worship God, or just providing religious goods and services to them? Solid biblical teaching is important. Structure follows purpose. We are failing to dig down into the revelation of God and let the revelation of God set the compass. If you are not careful, your program sets your agenda.

I. Worship

A. Definition of Worship: We want to go deeper into the New Testament idea of worship. The reason for this is that the Word sets the agenda. It sets our work and responsibility. As leaders, this is where we get the inspiration for what we do. The world doesn't need your ideas; that is not the purpose of the church. Our purpose is to unveil the redemption of God's salvation history. We are to demonstrate who God is and who we are and where our place is and who we are to serve and how we are to live in love and worship. Worship in Scripture is to kneel before another out of respect and honor. The word in Greek is *proskuneo* and it is found 59 times in the New Testament. When the disciples saw Jesus for the first time after the resurrection in Matthew 28:9, 'But Jesus met them, saying, 'Greetings!' they came to him, held on to his feet and worshiped him,' they literally bowed down to him. This type of worship only goes to God. We worship only the Living God; 'away with you Satan,' Jesus says, 'for it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'

B. Service that We Owe to God: That is another New Testament verb which is called *latreuo* which implies service that we owe to God. In the song of Zechariah quoted in Luke's Gospel, God has shown mercy upon us. Luke 1:74, 'that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, may serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him for as long as we live.' This word serve has to do with our religious responsibility to minister to God by worshipping. Since we belong to God and redeemed by Christ and filled with his Spirit, it is proper to understand our lives in terms of serving God. We serve God by worshipping him and loving him. This breaks down when a person spends 60, 70 or 80 hours a week being busy and their lives starts to come unhinged. All sorts of negative things begin to unfold. You go in and talk with them and love them and ask how much time they are actually receiving God's love in their life. Inevitably you will hear that it isn't much. We owe it to God to sit at his feet with Mary. This is our service as leaders and our true

worship. The author of Hebrews gives us an excellent understanding of this movement of service by saying, ‘since we are receiving the kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks by which we offer to God an acceptable worship. That term for worship there is service with reverence and awe. It is my duty and responsibility to worship the Living God. We see much of the same type of instruction in Romans 12:1 by Paul saying, ‘therefore I appeal to you by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice – alive, holy, and pleasing to God which is your reasonable service. As leaders we have to eat what we sell! We have to ingest what we are giving to others. We have to have this at work in our own lives.

So, spiritual worship is where our physical bodies are at God’s disposal. Dualism is still alive; you do service on Sunday and then go live like hell during the week. No! It doesn’t work that way. You, as a leader must bring your people to realize that this is whole, my body is presenting to God in worship. All of this is based on Pauline thought of the mercies of God. What a great privilege to know that all we are belongs to the Lord and we offer this type of worship daily. All that I am and have is at your disposal. There is movement here; we have been so burned by some parts of the church that we are afraid to enter into the movement; the movement of bowing hearts. It is okay to present the totality of our lives in worship in service and sacrifice. We are responding to the majesty and the goodness of God through returning love of him. He loves us and we return that love to him and to others. I love what N.T. Wright, a great New Testament Theologian, says about this; worship is nothing more or less than love on knees before the beloved. But what do we have today; and here my heart is saddened. Through my interaction through hundreds of congregations and through speaking into the mindset of contemporary leaders; there are a lot of good people with good hearts who are seeking to faithfully serve the Lord. While we are observing, an alarming number of leaders are following hard after directives that are not necessarily aligned with classical Christianity.

C. Priorities: Tim Keller commented in his book, *Center Church Doing Balanced Gospel Centered Ministry in Your City*; there is a sense that religion is to provide spiritual goods that meet individual spiritual needs for freedom from guilt and bondage. This is a by-product; we do get freedom, but if you put that up front; it is the primary reason why you are in worship and your leadership centers around that, then you are short circuiting the whole thing. Our purpose is to worship the Living God and he will produce all sorts of fruit, but if you invert that. If you put meeting needs first as the primary point of worship, you have inverted the purpose of God. Are you there as leader to provide a service; are you there to provide religious goods and services? Are you there to grow an organization, to promote a cause? None of this may be bad in or of themselves, but all of which may

miss the great point. I believe that as a leader in a local congregation that we have to intentionally review whether we are leading our people into transforming relationships with the Living God where we are leading them to worship God or whether we are providing religious goods and services to them. Every congregation is going to courageously press into this question of whether worship has become commodified to where you come to get the good things in life rather than offer your life and bow down in love and honor our Living God.

D. Four Obstacles to Leadership in Worship: We find at least four major obstacles to leadership in true worship. The first obstacle is behind the scenes in working with pastoral leaders and ministry leaders is that numbers trump worship. In other words, the way we count success is by how many sheep or goats are coming in, not by the quality of love and life and worship that is being produced. This will drive leaders. Why? It is because numbers will project that something good is happening. Are we against numbers? No! In a society that is falling apart, we ask the Lord to bring in the harvest. We want number for that represent people and souls, but when that leads the charges a deep cancer starts eating at the organization. The second obstacle is very dangerous for you as a leader. Self-exaltation is substituted for God. This can happen with deep gifted people; it can happen in worship where the worship leader starts drawing people into his or her giftedness. They start taking honor; the worship leader has to be invisible; they point beyond themselves. This is the same for the speaker; they start drawing people into the gifts they have. We are to point beyond ourselves. Who are we exalting here; what is the point here? All of us, sheep and shepherds alike are called to worship and adore the lamp of God and remember not to us give glory! Sometimes in leadership, people who have a need to be needed are drawn into pastoral leadership. So, this idea of standing before people becomes paramount for you. That is what defines your life. For leaders, what defines our lives is leading people to worship the Living God. Thirdly, we are deeply alarmed at the lack of participation that we see in contemporary evangelical services that voids the call to worship with all that we are.

Of course, there are exceptions to this, but in many locations people come to worship with no expectation of significant involvement whatsoever. They just sit there; they are not throwing their lives into worship. They are not being led to worship the Living God. They are not being led to exalt God and lift his name high. This is not a spectator sport. This is full participation in the body of Christ. We are also very concerned about how glorifying God seems to take second place to addressing human need. We know that Jesus spent a lot of time addressing human need in bringing healing to the people. We are not denying that at all. What we are saying here is that the priority of

worship is ascribing worst and praise to God and meeting needs is a result that flows from that. Anytime we move into the very presence of God, he is free to address the whole spectrum of human collapse and hurt. When the major attempt of worship is reduced to make people feel better about themselves or for meeting pressing needs in their lives, then the spirit is literally hindered in bringing about the full redemption that God has for them. As God is exalted and thanked and praised in worship, our lives are linked to him in such a way that he is able to bring his healing and his love into us.

Decades ago, a worship expert by the name of Robert Weber; he is now in the Kingdom also. Weber said that we need to let go of our intellectual idea of worship and realize there is more to worship than in a sermon; we have to let go of our evangelic notice of worship and recon with the fact that worship is not primarily directed toward the sinners who need to be converted. We must let go our entertainment expectation and remind ourselves that we are not in church to watch a Christian variety show. This is an absence of clarity in leadership. That is what we are addressing here and that is a spiritual issue. This confuses your heart, your compass isn't set. In fact, the compass may even be set by the values of society or by the values of contemporary and populace ideas saying that this is how you ought to do church. We get values that are based more out of a fallen culture even within the church itself. So, we get taken over. In worldwide Christianity, there is an important issue regarding worship. The biblical call to love and adore Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a call to lift in praise to the trinity, not ourselves. As such, many of us have to learn the very true nature of worship for the first time. We are going to have to repent on how we have neglected this and how we have lost our way. For myself, I am guilty of doing everything I have talked about here. I want to be transparent, but I want to press on the concern that in much of the church today there is evidence lacking of why the church is here. I think we need to hear the call of Scripture again.

Psalms 95 gives us a very clear call, 'come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker for he is our God and we are his people; the People of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.' We need to hear the warning from Psalm 95, 'Oh, that today, you would listen to his voice. Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, like they were that day at Massah in the wilderness.' In worship, our hearts are set on worshipping God and exalting him. Jesus taught us through his own personal example to honor both the Father and himself, because we worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You see this in John 5:19-23; and in honoring God, we turn away from false worship that can get us so quickly. I am not saying that numbers don't count for the Lord, for they do. Every person is counted as sacred in the eyes of God and worthy of the redemption of Jesus. The redemption of

Jesus is universal; we want any positive response in worship as long as you are not preaching and teaching just for the praise. Sometimes you will have rejection where the Holy Spirit is trying to work. I am not saying that the Word of God should be minimized in worship. If anything, we need to increase in providing a strong exegetical expository preaching and Spirit anointing messages. We want this and I am not saying that we shouldn't address the needs of people. They should be robustly addressed. Bishop Robert Solomon in Singapore says that we come into God's presence to remember who he is and what he has done for us (Psalm 107:22). We come to celebrate his presence in our lives and to thank him for all that he is and does and then to express our Love to him and our love for him. From the beginning to the end, he writes, the worship service should be grounded in our relationship we have with God and should be characterized by the joy that comes from it.

II. Joyful Self-forgetfulness

In the worshipping community and also within our private adoration of God, there is an important aspect of joyful self-forgetfulness that unfolds. That needs to reverberate in the body of Christ. While we thank God for all that is accomplished for us in Christ. In worship, we do not approach the trinity with self-interest in mind. This is a major issue in the church today. Here, I refer back to the subject of functional transcendence where I approach God for what is in it for me. In the truest sense of worship, I am not approaching God with self-interest in mind. God is not there to give us the best imaginable things that we can dream of. He is not there to enhance everything about us; through indeed, he will bless us in ways we can't even imagine. Like Paul in Philippians 3:13-14, we go forward to the heavenly call of God in Christ, Jesus. Therefore, refusing to use God for self-interest and the people of God to promote ourselves, we acknowledge what Evelyn Underhill says that worship is essentially disinterested which means only God. There is a proper place and time for prayers of petition that seek God for genuine needs. When the early church came together, they spent a large amount of time praying for needs, but that was secondary. In Christian worship, we always remember that is only one object of adoration in praise, God and God alone, blessed be the name of the Lord. Let us set our hearts on the one God and true worship of him.

III. Questions and Answers

A. Worship is for an audience of one; why is there such a huge resistance to transcendent functionalism? You may have better insights that I do here. I don't think that we are being taught about this. Who is teaching this now? Another aspect has to do with our models; it is

important who you model. Who is your hero? Who are the solid biblical people grounded in the Bible? What are you chasing after and what is driving all of this? If this is all about building a bigger audience; it is all about the crowd. Why are we not grounding ourselves in the Word of God? There are even larger issues. At the time of the reformation, the Word of God had been neglected for centuries. It was really important at the time of the reformation for the sermon to start taking the primary place in the worship service. When you read about the schedules of some of the great preachers we now know. I am including John Wesley as part of the reformation. They were preaching on a daily basis many times. We needed to exalt the sermon and the sermon today needs to have its rightful place, solid biblical teaching. Why would I go to some place where I am hearing what somebody thinks rather than the mind of Christ? When I got out of seminary, I accepted the evangelical thought that my primary job was to preach great sermons. And if I did that, people would come from all over and I would not have to worry about anything else. That is a partial truth. I didn't really have my compass set. Now, I am not devaluing the Word of God at all. If anything, I want to see that sermons take a stronger place in evangelical Christianity today. But the primary purpose why you are in that worship service is not to meet human needs, not even to preach a sermon but to worship the Living God and to hear from God through his Word and to receive his goodness through his gifts of love.

B. Obligations that affect These Issues: You have named several obstacles which seem from your survey and observations. Behind those, the structure of modern churches, the leadership structure, the financial obligations and how to meet those.

Structure follows purpose; this makes your question very critical for the spiritual life of leaders today. This question will push a lot of us against a wall. What we tend to do is invert it and let contemporary structure determine purpose. Luther and others were really clear that the church was always in need of reformation. If you start out from England coming to the United States and on your compass which has 360 degrees on it and if you are off by one degree, you are going to miss where you want to land by thousands of miles. We are always resetting and bringing the boat or airplane by in alignment with the compass. What we are failing to do today; we are failing to dig down into the revelation of God and allow the revelation of God to set the compass. You get bricks and mortar and programmatic approaches to ministry which takes time and money and energy. So before you know it, the program itself sets the agenda. Part of the response is, we are called to transform systems. The real issue is how do you do it without blowing it up along the way and destroy people's lives. It can be done and we will slightly mention this as we go further into our

leadership. The answer is, form follows purpose. I have to set what my form is and that is the courage that leaders have to take on today. Leadership bodies need to recognize that this isn't about 'my' vision; this is about God's vision for his church.

CHAPTER 21. PHILOSOPHY AND FORMS OF WORSHIP

Movements in worship: 1. kneeling in acts of loving worship. Kneeling in submission before God to acknowledge that you are dependent on him. 2. Exalting God by declaring his worthiness 3. Receiving God's life symbolized by the sacrament of communion. 4. Empowers us and encourages us to go out and serve. We participate in the fellowship and life of the Trinity. We need to immerse ourselves in relationship to God and let that inform and empower what we do so that our worship service is more than creating an experience or transmitting information. Be explicit about your purpose in worship and include prayer.

I. Distinction between Leading Others in Worship and Performing

As leaders we need to understand that in leading worship we have to make strong distinctions between whether it is performance based or is it leading others in worship. Also, if there is a person who doesn't have any confidence, then it is a major distraction. So, am I there to lead others in worship or am I there to perform for others? These are values for you as a leader has to take the time to get your mission straight. What is it that the Word says is our mission? Then you start working out your values and that we are not here to perform for others. We are not performance oriented but instead we are worship oriented. While in one of Tim Keller's congregations in New York City, there was no overheads, no cameras and only two simply instruments up front. The only electronics were the lights and mikes, but there was a strong sense of worship during that time. They had already taken the time to work through those types of issues. Let us continue on in this leadership and consider how we are called to follow some ancient paths of worship.

II. Ancient Paths of Worship

A. Examine Our Own Lives: Think about the great commandment that Jesus gave us; to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, soul, mind and strength. This is from Mark 12:30. This is the qualification that Jesus reinforced; we should worship the Lord our God and serve him only. This requires us to examine our own lives. Am I leading a life of personal worship and adoration as

well? You kind of get disqualified internally even in your own thinking, if you, as a leader, are merely a performance based person and you are not living out what you are preaching. So, a big part of up front spiritual leadership in setting the compass of my life; I am going to first follow Christ in this ministry position. You would think that this is elementary and wouldn't have to be spelled out, but it does have to be spelled out. I would never want to make worship formulae; in other words to put a formula on how God wants you to worship. There are different streams in God's church. I know there are a number of streams that says they are the only true church; they are the only ones with the pure water of God. Well, we love them as well. There are a number of streams in God's kingdom and history of the church. I want to have deep respect for every major Christian stream. I want to stay within that boundary. But, are there foundational movements that the Lord wants us to apply both in our own lives, in our leadership lives, in our family lives and in our church life.

B. Forms of Worship: I want to suggest some movements here. The first movement is about kneeling in acts of loving worship in our hearts with the totality of our physical bodies. The heart is the major issue here. Are we kneeling in submission before Father, Son and Holy Spirit? It is not my church, it is your church. Actually, it isn't even my ministry; I need to get rid of those personal pronouns. Today Lord, I am here for your ministry, for your kingdom. So, in kneeling primarily in spirit with all that I am before the blessed trinity, I am acknowledging that I am a completely dependent creature and I am looking to God as my teacher and Lord. Jesus, not only has the right to instruct us in all things, but to ask for our total loyalty in all things. So, I am kneeling in my heart and my life. The second movement concerns exalting God and lifting his name high in worship. By declaring his worthiness in saying the Psalms and singing the hymns and in offering him praise; even as a leader, whether you are the worship leader or the pastor. You should be clear; when gathering the people, it is for the sake of worship. Like Eugene Peterson says that we are here to worship the Living God. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. This is from Psalm 136:1; we are letting worship lead us and guide us. In worship we are affirming God's character. We are acknowledging who he is and by affirming his character, we are establishing our personal lives, our family life and our congregation on the revelation of who God is. That is what is preeminent and that is what the world needs most. We are responding to his self-discloser that came in through the incarnation by returning and showing our love to him.

Third, are we coming forth in whatever way your local congregation does this, to receive his gifts? At the heart of the sacraments which Jesus started on the night before his death; we are coming for the body and the blood. This is receiving his life into our lives. We are placing everything

before him when we do this. Everything that we are, we are laying down our lives before him; we are literally laying our lives before the feet of Jesus. These ancient paths of God's church offer a reliable path today because when we kneel down, we bow down and lift high and come forward to receive; then we are able to go out to serve the mission of God that he has for us. We are being empowered and encouraged to go out and serve. So, in summing to God and lifting his name high and placing our lives as a living sacrifice before him, the Holy Spirit enables us to participate in what James Torrents calls the Son's communion with the Father. The Father is pouring out his life into the Son and the Son is returning that life. So, the Son's communion with the Father, Torrents wrote in his vicarious life of worship and intercession. This is taking us into the heavens and we are participating in the worship and adoration and giving and receiving of love. This is going on in the very heart of the Trinity. We are called to seek nothing less in worship and may Lord help us here.

III. The Public Worship of God is Overloaded

This is an issue that we have seen in our interviews and onsite visits in our work with a number of denominations and with the work with our own students. Across God's church today, we are also finding that the public worship of God is overloaded. We are finding that in pastoral leadership, the leaders are trying to do too much in their worship services. We are blessed with some out-standing sermons as we go from church to church. I sat in one of those sermons, a first class message on following Jesus and being his disciples. The pastor of this large church really explicated well the call to discipleship. This pastor finished the sermon by calling people to the altar to commit their lives to discipleship and there was a large response to that. I was very thankful for it. Then, I walked out of that service and the more I thought about it, the more disturbed I became. Why would I feel this way when such a biblical call of discipleship took place? In going to the literature of the church and looking at what the church was offering through its various ministries and programs, I didn't see a single thing in regards to where a new Christian could come in and learn what it means to be a disciple. It was probably there but I didn't see a process for it. The pastor took the lazy way out; he was trying to hold up discipleship without offering any real avenue for discipleship. Not only that but he didn't know his own traditions. The tradition asks how discipleship is accomplished. Some discipleship is done in these large services. They hear and receive the word and also the sacrament of Holy Communion. They were doing all of that there, but discipleship in the history of our Christian tradition has been historically accomplished through Jesus being with the twelve disciples. He ministers to the crowds and then pours his life into the twelve disciples. You can read

this in the book by A.B. Bruce in the late 1800s called, *The Training of the Twelve*.

The Lord loves that pastor and congregation and he is going to bless them. I think this church is representative of what we have found in any number of settings. We saw people trying to do healings and there were also deliverance ministries within the primary worship service. We saw people trying to do justice ministry and other ministries that really cannot be accomplished outside of small group interaction, yet they are packing it into the worship service. They are trying to accomplish too much in the worship services. It is like Apollos in Acts 18; he was an eloquent person and well versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord and he spoke with burning enthusiasm. He taught the things of God accurately, but there was a problem that we see in verse 25. He knew only the baptism of John. The church had to take him and provide more instructions into his life. The church isn't accomplished to merely right thinking. Apollos had this but he didn't have all the information here. He needed more in his life to accomplish the purposes of the church. I look at Eugene Peterson and what is reflected in his book, *The Pastor*, on page 239. He says that my theological education had pivoted on Martin Luther and John Calvin, brilliant and comprehensive thinkers and writers. They taught me to think largely passionately about God in the Scriptures. For them forming the Christian life was primary but not entirely a matter of recovering right thinking, understanding and doctrine. This was rightly so in that day and time. Yet, after a prolonged time of struggling, what Peterson called the Bad Lands. He had gotten to know Sister Gwenevieve, the head of a Carmelite Monastery of Nuns. As Peterson looked back into his own training, he reflected this; I had received a theological education adequate for preparing me a professor in the classroom, dealing with knowledge and faith seeking understanding. But now as a pastor, a great deal of my life is dealing with souls as they went about their lives, but the life of the soul and attentiveness of souls to God that as prayer, I had taken this for granted because it was simply assumed and peripheral to my training. But the people that Sister Gwenevieve had put him in touch with taught him how to rightly pray with the same disciplined care as Luther and Calvin took with the Scriptures and believing rightly. This was something like faith seeking holiness.

A. Our Mission is to Work through the Power of the Holy Spirit to hold up the light of Worshipping the one True God: This is what Apollos needed in his life. He needed the fullness of God in his life. So, just as Apollos needed Priscila and Aquila and Paul to have that fullness of understanding in his life. Peterson needed Luther and Calvin as well in his life. I think we need to refocus our worship energies, not just presenting the truth or creating an experience but taking all aspects of our lives and bowing before the Father and consuming fire of love. I think that is part of

the call; it is part of a generation of leaders and part of the repentance of the whole of several generations of leaders that need to rethink what we are doing in terms of leading the people of God in what is our role and as part of reclaiming the priority of worship in our lives. I am thankful that there are many people who are like Apollos, truly seeking to do the right thing. What we are trying to do is to dive deeper into the Word and to let the Word speak to you and direct you and lead you in all of this. As the flock of God, the church, we have a huge task before us. We want to remember what that task is, namely, our mission is to work through the power of the Holy Spirit to hold up the light of worshipping the one true God to whole worldwide system now that will have nothing to do with that kind of worship. It is darkened by false worship. In the 1st chapter of Romans, Paul gives very keen insight which Augustine and Luther picked up on. In establishing the major problem of the world, you can't understand the good news unless you understand the bad news.

B. Righteousness and Wrath (Romans 1:17ff): So, he is writing about the righteousness of God in verse 17. The righteousness of God is what God declares good and upright and holy. We live in a culture that now declares all sorts of perversion as being good. Then in verse 18, he says that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness. When was the last time anyone has heard a sermon on the wrath of God. How do you understand the atonement without this and your need for redemption? The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness. Wrath is God being opposed to disobedience of humanity and will confront that disobedience with his holy love.

C. The Greatest Issue is No worship and the Cure is Proper Worship: The key here is understanding what Paul is saying about what God opposes. The word, ungodliness, literally means no worship. Dr. Kenneth Kenlaw, a great Old Testament scholar, now is heaven talked about this. Paul wrote that the greatest issue we face as sinful and broken human beings is our lack of proper worship of the God who has been revealed to us through Jesus the Messiah. Hear the word, the greatest issue is no worship and the cure through Christ our Lord is proper worship. Your mission is to lead the people of God into proper worship. This in of itself becomes a literal kingdom vehicle through which God shares his light with a broken and fallen world. Do we need congregations compromising by turning to society values? What do we have to offer society or are congregations holding up the light of a worshipping community where the people of God in that community have their heart, minds and leadership set? We are attracting people to worship God, not to do anything else. Those who don't worship are ungodly; they are without worship. These are the ones that Christ died for.

D. Without God, People Naturally Go to Unrighteousness: Without the on project object to worship, without a life giving relationship with our living Lord, the resurrected Lord, humanity naturally collapses into unrighteousness. This Greek term, *Adikia*, is the word for unrighteousness. This is the worldwide culture today and has it ever been any different? No, there is nothing new here. We have attitudes and actions that violate all that is good and all that is right as revealed by God. Since they have no root of goodness in God, these behaviors begin to bring about devastating consequences in our lives. That which is opposed to God, by its very nature, is dark and destructive to life. It separates us from the love of the Father and it injects nothing but destruction and death into our lives.

E. Self-Seeking (Romans 2:8): Paul then gives further definition to our proclivity toward lack of worship in Romans 2:8; he sums up the basic problem as self-seeking. It is the self, bending back upon itself; Paul points forward to the great judgement of humanity that is going to come when Jesus returns in verse 5. When this day occurs, Paul states that we will be repaid according to people's deeds. Those who are redeemed in Christ, they go to heaven; however, some of their works get burned up. There is going to be some smoky people going up into heaven. Those who have sought to live according to God's highest design for humanity, doing good in seeking for the glory and honor that belongs to God. These will receive the gift of eternal life, he says in verse 7, but those who are self-seeking, whom have not sought after God and haven't obeyed the truth but instead lived in wickedness in verse 8; they will receive nothing but the indignation of God for their self-centeredness and their lack of worship. It is a right and a good thing; holy love will not allow falsehood or anything that is contrary to God's goodness into the New Heavens and the New Earth. We simply cannot be a Universalist and read Scripture. So, Augustine and Martin Luther, both of them highlight Paul's term of self-seeking. The divine plan is for us to return the love we have received from the Trinity back to the Trinity in worship and adoration and then share that love in unselfish acts of goodness to those around us. But in the collapses of self-curvature, the love intended for God and others are pulled back and wrongly focused on self. Leaders, this is why we cannot focus worship services around what is in it for us in terms of earthly benefits. All we are doing then is promoting self-curvature, making the Christian life all about me and all about what I am going to gain either materially or whatever other way you want to say it. That is distorted love; all that does is works for self-advantage. No, we are called to work toward self-donation, *kenosis*.

Kenosis is Paul's term. Does that mean that God doesn't give blessings during this life-time? No, I have been blessed beyond imagination. My wife and I have had all of our needs met according

to his riches in glory and then abundance on top of that. But, we are not called to put those things first. As is true of all aspects of the Christian life, the Word of God leads us into the fullness intended for the worshiping body of Christ. We want to step into the joy of worship.

IV. Questions and Answers

A. Is Corporate Worship a Reflection of Individual Worship and Individual Worship a reflection of Corporate? Worship is entering into a relationship among the trinity and it is true first in our hearts and then it works out at a corporate level if that is your leadership role. Is this a fair way of thinking of it and is it fair to think of it in reverse as well? I'm trying to think of a red flag; if I am a leader in the church, would it be a red flag for me to look at corporate worship and if it looks like it is focused on the human benefit, do I need to ask about my own personal worship and am I really worshipping as an individual? In other words, is the corporate a reflection of the individual or is the individual a reflection of the corporate?

Worship begins for all of us as a response to how God has loved us. Even as there is a giving and receiving of love in the trinity, I'm called to receive the love that the Father has for me that is demonstrated through the Son and applied to the Holy Spirit; his presence is with me, loving, guiding, uphold, and inspiring. My own personal worship is an outflow of that. What I think you are saying, the red flag comes when I as the leader see worship as a mere functional part of my job. In other words, I am there to perform this service, not in the worship type of sense instead to perform a function and that it needs to be good. I need to inspire the people and meet their needs. Could it be, so that they will affirm me and like me and keep me around? This can be an exaggeration but it can also be right. So, is this a function or does worship flow out of a very strong and ongoing relationship that I have with God? I as the leader of the flock am inviting others to be a part of this amazing reality of honoring God.

B. How do you Implement Change in a Way that People will Respond Positively? In listening to this morning's teaching about worship; is first all very inspirational and I think anybody with a heart for God will find themselves responding and wanting to worship better. But when I turn around and think of how to implement this in a church setting, for most people, we are finding ourselves already in a leadership position of a church. The so-called worship has been set up by the denomination long ago or by church tradition or whatever. So, it is already fairly fixed. There is the issue of trying to fix it and try to implement a less meeting the needs type worship and more toward the act. I think it is very obvious what is going to happen, people will leave. They are not getting

what they came for, which was a good show for example or a Christian variety show. I find there is a dichotomy of how you actually implement this in a way that people can accept it.

You are talking about a process which is one of the great questions before the church today. If we know things are not quite where they need to be or far away from where they need to be, what would be a God honoring and people blessing process be in order to move it. One of the things that we actually say for church planting which you have been a part of. In many cases, it is easier to start with a whole newly formed church as long as you have it down in your own heart and mind. This is how I believe God wants us to go. But, nevertheless, I want leaders who aren't planning to be encouraged by this. It can be done and it can be done without blowing the thing apart. Will people leave? Probably, I can't control that. This is part of having a migratory congregational culture anyway. Sometimes, it is because of you and sometimes it has nothing to do with you. A short answer would be team work; can I get a leadership team rolling? If you are the leader, then yes you can. Can I get a team rolling to iron this type of stuff out? There are wonderful organizations that can help you. One such organization is Spiritual Leaders INK out of Kentucky, a proven organization to help you get a leadership team to help you work out what God's will is and his vision for us here. How can we start revising our mission and our vision? How can we have concerts of prayer where you get the whole congregation to come in and pray for different things and receive input from everybody that wants to speak into it? There are ways to do this without blowing the whole thing apart. Another organization is from Ashbury Theological Seminary. There is a whole branch that is teaching people how to do this. Cultural change can take place and it can take place without a war.

C. Prayer to Invite and acknowledge God's Presence: I have been in worship services where there is actually very little prayer during the worship, an opening prayer or closing prayer but perhaps not even that much. But even if we have a prayer that would invite the Holy Spirit into the worship service and ask the Lord to be here in this place and in this time whether it includes liturgy or whatever the form is. A lot services have deleted a lot of prayers.

That is exactly what we are also finding in our interviews. You can be in a worship service and worship is never mentioned. A simply approach here is be explicit in saying that we are gathered here to worship God.

The purpose of this is to get our leaders focused. What is your job, what is really your ministry here? It may not quite be what you think it is according to contemporary cultural terms. But let me also say, you can transition it all. It can be done; the Lord can help you. You take what you

have and through his love and grace, you transition it.

CHAPTER 22. EXAMPLES OF WORSHIP IN REVELATION 4

The elders fall before the throne, they worship the Lord and they cast their crowns before him. Falling before the throne represents an acknowledging of God as absolute deity. What is going to happen in the future tells us what we should be doing now. When we fall down before the throne, our heart condition is inward humility and submission to the Lord. Then they raise up and exalt the Lord by proclaiming his worth. Inward love results in proclaiming what is right, good, just and holy. Taking of crowns is an outward expression of placing everything we have under the Lordship of Christ and an inward movement of total abandonment of everything we are to God.

I. Three Movements of Worship in Revelation Chapter 4

I would like to continue on in Scripture looking at what the Word has to say. I want to commit this Chapter to M. Robert Mulholland, who has been a guide for me for many years. Also, I want to add that Biblical Training Institute has a course by Mulholland in Revelation. I highly recommend this to you. Dr. Mulholland studied and taught for decades on the Book of Revelation. He was a New Testament scholar. I think that his work in the 4th chapter of Revelation goes to the very heart of what we have been talking about. It goes to the heart of pastoral congregational leaders in terms of how we understand our own personal living and understanding of how we are to lead others here. This is going to apply to all of us who are working for God's church. John proclaimed with the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, full of eyes all around inside, day and night without ceasing, they sing holy, holy, holy, the Lord God, the almighty who was and is and is to come. Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one seated on the throne, who lives forever and forever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one that is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and forever. They cast their crown before the throne singing, you are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created. As the four living creatures continually sing their song of worship, the twenty-four elders enter into a three-fold action of the worshipping church. These are movements for all of us. The first fall before the throne and they worship the Lord; they then cast their crowns before him.

Mulholland comments that this posture of falling before God's throne represents an acknowledgement of God as absolute deity. It is important to also say in quoting Mulholland from

Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, a Tyndale House publication. They are acknowledging God as an absolute deity. This is the whole falling down before which is classic Christian worship. In their movement of falling before God, they are paying him proper homage by adoring him. Then in throwing their crown before the throne, Mulholland notes that this represents authority and rule with the elders yielding control of their lives to God. So, falling before the Lord and worshipping him and cast our crowns; we are yielding all of the authority and rule and control of my life before God. This allows God to be God in their lives on God's terms, not on their terms. Since all of the indicators in the Book of Revelation point to worship as the primary activity of the Bride of Christ in the New Testament and in the New Jerusalem that is to come. Theologically, what do we say about that? The end determines the now; in other words, what we are going to be doing in the kingdom determines what we need to be learning to do and actually doing it now. So, the end determines the now. The Bride of Christ in the New Jerusalem; we are going to do well to allow our future adoration of God to give literal substance and shape to our present worship in the church. Dr. Mulholland's exegesis of the Word can help lead us in our contemporary worship today and can lead the whole church.

There is a physical action; I fall down before the throne. What is the heart condition as the Lord is very concerned with the heart. We can go through physical actions and it can be worthless religion. The heart condition is inward humility and submission to the Lord; not my will Lord but your will. This outward posture of acknowledging God as our superior in all things is matched with an ongoing inward movement of claiming God is Lord and Master. You fall down and then raise back up and you exalt, lifting up your exaltation of the Lord by claiming his worthiness. He is worthy and we declare all of those attributes that he is. This is the raising up. The outward posture is the raising up in terms of adoration of God; I am lifting up my eyes and my heart. What is the inward love? It is inward love expressed by lifting up the Lord. How do you feel when your husband or wife speaks well of you; this uses the Latin word of benedictory, speaking well of someone. We are speaking well of God is what we are saying here. I am speaking well of God. This is important because when you live and people get caught up with all that is wrong with the world, or when you live in place and time with partisan bickering and contrary political views, both in the church and out of the church. You are not going to tie into that; what we are going to do is tie into speaking well of God. We are getting our eyes off of what is wrong with things by declaring what is right, good and just and holy and honorable and all of that is grounded in who God is. This is inward love which is an ongoing movement of declaring the goodness of God, even in the mess of our own daily lives.

Then they take their crowns off. These are our achievements, our good works for the Lord and any honor that has been given to us. It is a good thing to take it off now. I had at one point a number of plaques, awards and diplomas on the office wall. One day I thought when any of my children or grandchildren would even want one of those things, much less put them up on a wall anywhere. No, of course not; so I took them all down. Nothing is there now.

We thank the Lord and we throw our crowns before the Lord. It is acknowledging that every good thing that happens in my life who made that possible. All of this comes from his mercy in our lives; this is undeserved mercy. It is an outward action of placing all that we are under the Lordship of Christ. It is an ongoing inward of total abandonment of everything, all that we are to God. Now, we have a formative movement of bowing low and lifting high and casting our crowns.

II. Intentional and Focused Worship of God is Often at Best, Secondary

We are painfully aware that as we attended worship services over a broad area. That intentional and focused worship of God is often at best, secondary. All too often, not even mentioned in worship services; these things are neglected. We are failing at every primary level of recognizing and honoring the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as our triune God. This is the one Lord of our lives, the three of our love. Without being prescriptive in any manner for every Christian tradition has a way of working out the application part of worship or without trying to dictate specific styles of worship. I really want to press all the streams of Christianity that we are being summoned by the elders in Revelation. This is the true elder board here, to bow before God and to declare his praise. The people of God deserve this and they are going astray because of its absence in the light of worship is not breaking into the darkness of this fallen world. I want to also suggest that we learn how to worship by looking back at an account in Scripture that shows up in all four Gospels.

You will see this first in Matthew 26:6-13 where a sinful woman comes to Jesus. She has lived a life of self-curvature where she has taken the love that has meant to be for God and others and turned it back on herself. She has lived an immorally and corrupt miserable life. She was obviously filled with shame. As it seems that things can't get any worse for her, she finds herself in the presence of Jesus. No doubt she had heard about him; she knew about him. I think like everyone else she thought that he would condemn her. The Son of God sees right through her sin and shame to which she was meant to be. He responds to her, not with condemnation but with mercy, with love and with amazing forgiveness. Nobody is beyond the reach of forgiveness and she

in turn responds to his love by receiving this forgiveness. She trusted that he would indeed work out the mess that her life had become. So, while her life was still difficult for she still had issues that she was going to have to face. She had been restored; her basic dignity had been given to her. She was loved and she knew the love that she was seeking. She now had the opportunity to know God's intention for her life. What does she do? She brings the most expensive things she has and she broke it and poured it out on Jesus' feet. It was an expensive perfume; she bowed before her Lord and anointed his feet with her costly gift and she wipes his feet with her own hair. Now this woman offers up the most costly gift that she had to give to Jesus and she gave her complete self with that gift and she literally offers all that she had in love and worship and adoration with the twenty-four elders.

We too are called to bow down and rise up in praise and to cast away the costly things of our lives; all of it before him, before the feet of Jesus. I have learned these from Robert Weber; as leaders we want to come into the presence and also to draw people into the presence of Christ and want to be really clear that we are here to worship. We are invoking the Holy Spirit to make this possible. We are praying and reaching out to God. In whatever tradition that you are in, I am trusting that the Word of God will be held up. I also like what John Stott said many decades ago, sermonettes make for Christian-nets. People of God need to come to the feast of the Word; Weber says that we come to the feast of the Word of God. We then respond in a classical sense. How? We come to the table of God to receive all of the gifts he has before us, then, we go out to serve. All of this is an action of worship and of bowing down and rising up and the blessing of going forth after throwing our crowns. Why? Why are we gathered? We are gathered to still our lives and to focus upon God who calls us into worship. We are inviting the Holy Spirit to enable our worship; this is why we are doing this. We come for the mystery of God and we bow down in submission and praise and then we listen. We listen to the Word. This is so important for anyone breaking the Word of Life and for them to listen to what God has to say. You want the mind of Christ for your people, not your own mind. The great systematic theologian, Thomas Olden said that this was why Jesus came. This kind of sets our agenda in bringing forth the Word. Jesus came to reveal God to humanity, to provide a high priest, interceding for us, who is able to sympathize with our human weakness and to offer us a pattern of fullness of human life. It was to provide a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all of humanity and to bind up the demonic powers. All this fullness of the Gospel is coming out in all that we preach and teach and it is all focused on Christ.

These are the things that we listen to as we study God's words; listening to God's word,

faithfully presenting God's word and in response the Word who is Christ Jesus; we say yes to him. We say yes to all that he wants us to. We do that by entering into the great sacrifice of our Savior. We remember what was done for us in the atonement. That is why we celebrate Holy Communion. We remember and look forward to the fullness of the banquet that is to come. We are also presently receiving all of his love through grace. Finally, we go forth; as a people of God who has listened and worshipped and responded and received and given our lives. We go forth. For those of you who are in leadership today. I want you to be encouraged; we don't have to collapse to the level of what is called anxious people pleasures. When you take the courage of God, he will help you, lovingly, graciously and at times firmly present his Word. We don't ever want to use the Word as a hammer to beat people. We don't want to use the Word to promote our own agenda. We want to let the fullness of the Gospel speak. When bow before him and rise up to praise him and cast our crowns before him, he is going to equip you. He will equip you; this is his work and his job and his kingdom and his church and I bless you in the name of Christ our Lord. May you be a true leader for God's Kingdom. Amen.

CHAPTER 23. CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

The call of Jesus to, "follow me" is the call to redirect everything in our lives. A disciple is one who seeks to fulfill the will of the father by actively following Jesus the Son while continually depending on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength. Faith is my trust in Jesus as well as the content of the Gospel. Practice is putting it into play. Catechism is the content of the faith, and catechesis is how you express it. Cheap grace is not biblical because it allows for justification without ensuing discipleship. Primary purposes of the church are to proclaim the Gospel, worship and make disciples. In addition to knowing the content, you must live it out. Clergy need to learn how to make and train disciples. Laity must be fully committed full-time ministers of the body of Christ.

I. A Call by Jesus in the Gospels to 'follow me.'

A. Definition of Disciple: This session is more on how we express our spiritual life. Your spiritual life is going to be shaped either positively or negatively by your actual ministry experience and how you are moving in either fidelity or non-fidelity to the Lord. Again and again in the Gospel, you see an explicit and implicit call from Jesus to follow him. It is the calling to redirect everything about our lives. The minute you compartmentalize anything, it just means that I don't want Jesus to have that part of my life. It is going to end up dragging everything back. In John 1:43, you will see

Jesus approaching Philip and he issues one of his great imperative commands, ‘follow me.’ This was a divine directive to Philip which changed the entire course of his life. It changed everything and in a similar manner the Holy Spirit is summoning followers to follow the Son of God today, to let everything be changed. In the New Testament, there are some prominent words and when you hear these words being used many times in the Gospels and Acts, you think that this needs my attention. It is this call to be a disciple. Can you imagine that the word disciple is used 264 times in the Gospels and Acts? That draws a lot of attention to the whole reality of following after Jesus because that is what a disciple does. My own definition is that a disciple is one seeks to fulfill the will of the Father by actively following Jesus, the Son, while continually depending upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength. You know by now how much I love Dallas Willard and he has mentored me via his works and writings. He has further understanding as to what it means to follow the Son of God. He says, ‘the disciple is one who is intent upon becoming Christ like and so dwelling in his faith and practice.’

B. Faith and Practice: So a disciple is intent on becoming Christ like. Following Jesus means that I am going to take on the character and nature of Jesus. So, the disciple is a person who is intent upon becoming Christ like and so dwelling in his faith and practice systematically and progressively rearranges his affairs to that end. By these decisions and actions, even today, one enrolls into Christ’s training, becoming his pupils or his disciples. In a number of Willard’s writings, he will talk about how we are called to be his apprentices, to learn how to do something. I was shown videos on how to throw pots and be a potter. I was given books and watched people do it but until a master potter taught me how to be a potter, I just couldn’t do it. I needed somebody who could clarify it to me. Willard’s terms of faith and practice are important. Faith is both my absolute trust in Jesus in all things and also the content of the Gospel. It is a Biblical and theological understanding of what it means to follow Christ. In other words, faith in the way Willard is using it is comprehension of the specific content of the Christian life. There is a way to the truth and the light and it is clearly shown in God’s Word. We are told by Jesus to love God and love our neighbor. This commandment is a big part of the Christian faith. It is intended to be both understood and to be realized in our lives. So in loving God and your neighbor, that is a faith command; it is the content of the Gospel. In practice, Willard spoke about faith in practice; how is it that I can realistically and practically as a leader take what I read and take what I hear in my heart and put it into practice? So, practice therefore, allows practical implementation; it is the integration of my life. I am getting the commands of Jesus and now I am going to integrate it into my daily life. I am actually

seeking to live in the reality of that command. So, faith and practice are both essential. So, faith is the content, as Willard is using it, of the Gospel. Practice is literally putting that faith into play; I am incarnating what the Lord asked me to live out in my daily life. So, a disciple of Jesus in their spiritual walk and life is going to set some fairly heavy priorities and one of those priorities is to know the content of the Gospel.

C. Catechism and Catechesis: Early in church history the word catechism was used. This is a Greek term; it is the content; catechism is the content of the faith of biblical theological teaching. Then you will hear about catechesis which is how we express the content. It is not enough to have content only, to know something without putting it into practice. That would like declaring that I love my spouse and I'm married to my spouse, but I never actually give solid expression to that love. Throughout much of church history, but specifically in the early church, these two points were never separated. You don't see a line going through catechesis or catechism; to know the Gospel in the early church, was to follow the Gospel. You didn't know about it. You put your life into it; it was not a topic to be studied in an academic manner. It was a life to be embraced completely. In classic Christianity, you live out the commands of Christ. In the later 1930's, another one of my heroes of the faith; he was a young German theologian by the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Many of you will know that name and for those who don't, I want to encourage you to get to know at least one work that he wrote. He was a Lutheran and he loved the Lutheran church. But the Lutheran church in Germany in that day and time had some major issues. They were giving into the culture literally. So, he was expressing deep concerns over the collapse of the denomination in the 1930's and he used the term, 'cheap grace.' He said that cheap grace allows for justification (the forgiveness of sins) without ensuing discipleship. They were merely taking the benefits without really throwing their lives into following Jesus. After tracing the misunderstandings of Martin Luther's followers, not the misunderstanding of Martin Luther himself, but of his followers as shown in his book, called the *Cost of Discipleship*. It is a classic work; I think that every student, every apprentice needs to get this book. Bonhoeffer made this scathing summary which is just as relevant today as it was then and it just doesn't apply just to Lutherans, but to all of us today.

D. Bonhoeffer on Discipleship: Bonhoeffer said, 'we confess that although our churches are orthodox (having right beliefs) as far as her doctrine of grace is concerned, we are no longer sure that we are members of a church which follows its Lord. We must therefore attempt to recover a true understanding of the mutual relation between grace and discipleship.' This is that relationship between faith and practice or grace and discipleship of trusting Jesus and following Jesus; it is a

both/and. You can't divide these things up. In that volume, Bonhoeffer went on to unpack what discipleship means. He continues, 'when we are called to follow Christ, we are called to an exclusive attachment to his person. This attachment must take the form of discipleship.' Why, because abstract ideas about Jesus and mere knowledge about Jesus do not end and of themselves make for a Christian. Texas had a saying, 'sitting in church on Sunday doesn't make you a Christian; any more than sitting in a hen house on Saturday night makes you a chicken.' There are decisions and actions that are involved in being a true disciple of Christ. The only true relationship that we can have with Jesus is to follow him. This is Bonhoeffer talking to us. At the end of the Book of Matthew, Matthew 28, you will see the primary purpose of the church. I want to connect this primary purpose with your spiritual leadership, your daily life as this is who you are called to be. This is what it means to be a Christian. The primary purpose of the church is always to proclaim the Gospel; that is what we do through word and action; plus it is to purpose Jesus.

II. Discipleship is a Primary Purpose of the Church

A. Content: In Matthew 28:16-20, the eleven had gone onto the mountain to meet Jesus after his resurrection. He told them that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to them; go, therefore and make disciples. This is our marching orders. We are to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded you. I will be with you always to the ends of the age. This is setting our compass; this business of making disciples and teaching them to obey. It is not to go and make decisions; it is decisions for Christ and you teach them to obey all that Jesus has taught. This is a huge issue for the church today and so, I want to drill down into it. So, through the help of the Holy Spirit, we are going to teach followers of Christ what he taught his disciples. We have to have content here. There is content to the spiritual life and that is biblical theological content, not the opinion of others.

B. Practice: So, we get the content and catechism in; then you have to do both, you have to have the catechesis along with the catechism. How many of you taught your children to ride a bicycle by showing them videos or verbally instructing them? You have to put the child on the bike and it takes practice and we stay with them until they learn. That is our job.

III. Few Leaders Can Articulate the Faith

A. Example: In the survey that we did across denominations and churches, we have

become alarmed. We have found that spiritual leaders, including the want-to-be spiritual leaders, few can articulate the faith. There is not a road map, a schema; it is just not happening. Few congregational leaders can clearly and winsomely articulate their core theological doctrine and they are not preaching and teaching from those doctrines. We have done enough interviews to see this and even though people have gone to some high powered seminaries and have an excellent education. They can tell you about these doctrines and theological truths; it is not what guides them. They are not teaching their people the foundational theology of Scripture. As an example, a middle aged man came to seminary. I was immediately drawn to him because of his loving nature and his sincere heart. He was a very high powered engineer by the name of Tony. He came from one of the greatest congregations in America today, doing a lot of good work. He was part of this congregation for decades; they had a lot of activities going on. Tony first got involved by teaching Sunday school, but he didn't know the faith like he wanted to. This was part of the reason he decided to get involved. He was eventually asked to pilot an evangelistic ministry called Alpha, a ministry well known today in churches. So, he taught Alpha and began to learn more about Jesus. Tony wrote about those days, 'burning with the fire of my born again experience,' he said. He started teaching Alpha and then started experiencing God in that congregation. 'I was directly being formed by the Holy Spirit and through the witness of others. There were people who were delivered from addiction and there was prayer in small group times.' This is a layperson the pastor dreams of having. So, Tony follows a common historical trajectory for those who are awakened in Christ. After five years of following Christ, the fire started to swain in his own life. In his small group Bible study, which he had established for dads with young children, he saw that they all were beginning to wonder about their faith. What does this all mean for us when we go to work on Monday morning; how do we live this out. They were struggling with the direct application of their faith to their families and to their work lives.

B. Thoughts: Tony said that after going to church services on Sunday, he really wasn't able to engage spiritually much pass lunch time on Monday. So, convinced that he wasn't able to effectively live out the Christian life, Tony spent the next seven years at his work, building a team based approached that was modeled on Christian values. This is a major international engineering firm. He asked the Lord to help him in dealing with those people who walked into his office and to be present with him. He implemented a no cursing rule within his team and he established specific Christian ways of behaving in contract negotiation and conflict resolution. It is great to have such men and women who implement the Gospel at their work place. During this time, Tony was still

struggling with all of this. He knew that Jesus died on the cross for his sins and that God spoke through Scripture. But listen to his language, he couldn't tell a doctrine from theology or from a tradition. He lacked firm footing for applying thoughts about the trinity and how to apply the incarnation of Jesus into his own life and those around him. What does the atonement of Christ mean for his everyday life at home and at work? He saw no structure of system for living out his faith; yet, he was deeply convinced that the Gospel was meant for anyone as a gift and to be able to live it out with joy. But some of that just wasn't in his life. Gnawing questions started to grow on him and began to wonder whether he had to go to seminary to understand all of this. That is where I met Tony for the first time. He came to seminary and I talked with him about whether or not he should come to seminary. The Lord actually led him to lay down a very high powered position and to walk away from it to come to seminary.

His own local church had been truly helpful in launching him into the Christian faith, but he didn't have a firm grasp on the faith side or a firm grasp on the formation side. What it is and how do you live it out. He had experienced Christ and taught about it. But, this is a global issue in the Christian faith. After Tony began attending seminary, he realized what was missing in his Christian life was simply discipleship. He was missing basic Christian doctrine and foundational spiritual formation. He said that he didn't know the whole narrative of the story. There is a story of salvation that starts from the beginning in Genesis; it starts with Adam and Eve and it ends with a marriage in Revelation with the body of Christ and Christ himself. While he rejoiced in his re-awakened faith and service opportunities; he was thankful for the missional component that his local congregation had going on. But he knew that he had not been standing on solid ground. He had struggles as a layperson for fifteen years to know and live the Christian faith. Tony loved his pastors and thanked God for them. He would be where he was today without the pastoral leadership within that congregation. But when you walk for fifteen years in the Christian faith and you can't define basic terms such as justification and the new birth and such as sanctification. He needed the theological landscape spelled out. He needed the connection between both basic doctrines of the faith and the formational practices of the faith. Tony should not have had to come to seminary to get the basics of the Christian faith. For you Christian leaders, I am trying to speak into your spiritual life; is your spiritual life founded on the classic historic primary doctrines of orthodox Christianity? These things were hammered out in major councils in the past two thousand years. Spirit life has to stand on the rock who is Christ and there is substance in that rock. If your spiritual life is going to be effective for the kingdom, we not only know what the content are, but we know how to get people on the bicycle

and how to get them balanced and equipped and have the right gear on.

C. Dallas Willard Thoughts: Dallas Willard in his 1998 classic, *Divine Conspiracy*, should be on everybody's book shelf. This is rediscovering our hidden life in God. It says that non-discipleship is the elephant in the church. It is not the much discussed moral failure and financial abuses or the amazing general similarities between Christians and non-Christians. Dallas Willard was a gentle gracious person. When he took up the sword of the Spirit, it was a sharpened sword and he used it well. These are the effects of the underlining problem. The fundamental negative reality among Christian believers now is their failure to constantly learn how to live their lives in the kingdom. This is an accepted reality; this is the prophet speaking. He saying that non-discipleship is an accepted reality. The division of professing Christians and those where it is a matter of whole life devotion to God and those who maintain a consumer or client relationship to the church is not an accepted reality for over fifteen hundred years. This started when the church became the official religion of the state. It goes back to the early three hundreds when this started. That is a lot of years of misunderstanding of the primary purpose of the church.

D. Apprenticeship not Considered Essential: Just like Bonhoeffer before him, Willard describes this elephant as cheap grace which avoids living as a whole hearted follower of Jesus and denies that discipleship to Jesus is the very heart of the Gospel and that we are called to order our lives as his apprentice and kingdom living and not just as a consumer of his merit. It is not just accepting what Christ does for us but we allow Christ to work within us in wholehearted discipleship. This is Christianity and when this is watered down, you will get something that is not Christianity, something that is not historical classic Christianity. So, spiritual leaders, our job is to train people in Christ likeness. You will have the faith side of this and the content side of this along with the living side of this going hand in hand. What feeds the elephant, Willard wrote and keeps it strong, is the absence of effectual programs of training that enables God's people to do what Jesus said in a regular and efficient manner. It is my thought that Dallas Willard that his voice has gone largely unheard. So, today, we are at a point where discipleship or apprenticeship to Jesus is no longer thought of as essential to faith in him. How could we arrive at this point? There is no curriculum for Christ likeness which Willard wrote about. So, when we talk about the spiritual life of a Christian leader, this has got to be clear and solid information and it has to work itself out in the way we actually do ministry and the way we perceive ministry. Otherwise we have a dichotomy between Jesus and ourselves. They are not connected in terms of how we work in the church. The church cannot afford this division. We have to recover this primary purpose of discipleship. This is

going to mean that both clergy and lay leaders are going to need to completely re-think their understanding of how church is to be led. Of course, you will need to learn the ancient discipline of discipleship making and lay people are going to have to make a move from passive non-engaged mere participation to a full committed full time ministry of the Gospel of Christ. Otherwise, you will end up with something other than Christianity. To do this, we are going to have to do a from-through and a to movement.

CHAPTER 24. FROM – TO MOVEMENT FOR CLERGY AND LAITY

Movements which are necessary for the church today to fulfill what God is calling them to do. For the clergy:

1. Moving from pastor as the primary minister to each believer fulfilling their calling as full-time ministers in their spheres of influence; 2. Moving from preaching only to not only appropriate sermon preparation time but also discipline a core group; 3. Moving from a priority on numbers to staying with a process that results in mature disciples; 4. From solo leadership to team leadership. Discipleship should not be optional. Old Christendom model is breaking down but confusion on whom and what we are called to be. "Is my first aim to make disciples, or do I just run an operation?" For the laity: 1. From going to church to being Church; 2. From expecting benefits from Christianity requiring no sustained effort to being intent on being disciples; 3. From being passive observers to full-time ministers. Primary purpose of leader is to equip the people of God to do the work of God.

I. Clergy

The spiritual life is not static; we are moving from whatever we are called out of and into the Kingdom of God and to that point where Christ will return where the New Heavens and New Earth will be established. We will be given new glorious physical bodies and this is something to move toward. Let us look at a movement that is going to be essential as we are working out spiritual leadership and as we are truly in our spiritual lives and we are listening to what the Lord is saying to the church today. Any person whether ordained or not; whoever is the head pastor is. I think one of the first movements that is going to happen is in regards to a ministry world view that says that the pastor is the primary ministry. In other words, we have pastor equals being a minister and we have to go and equip our congregation to step into the fact that every Christian is called to be a fulltime minister of the Gospel. Nothing less is enough for a biblical understanding of the spiritual life. Then we have to move pastors and clergy from an upfront understanding that preaching and teaching is

the summit of their ministry. Sometimes I get so frustrating with some of my students at seminary. I sometimes think that we need to change the name from seminary to ‘sermonary’. This is because their own world view says that the height of their ministry is going to be standing up in front of people and teaching them and that is their primary responsibility. We want people to be well-equipped and teach the Gospel and to lead the sheep. We want phenomenal outstanding messages for our Lord, but when you start looking at upfront as being primary; this represents only half of the truth of the Gospel and Jesus’ example to us. Yes, Jesus taught up front as in the Sermon on the Mount. He had upfront ministry but he invested the majority of his time behind the scenes discipling of the few. We want to have our leaders to invest appropriate time that is needed for up front work and this takes hours in order to speak well for our Lord. It cannot be Saturday microwave specials putting something together at the last moment. God’s people deserve better than this. We also have to understand our lives as being clergy; this is the whole pastor realm.

We also need to understand there are two sides to this; I need to also need to do discipleship. That is as much of my responsibility as is the upfront work. Then as the upfront leader to move my primary focus away from how many show up for the service or how many are doing specific things or how many decisions are being made. All of these are important, for sure, but my primary focus becomes staying with a process that result in mature disciples. What is biblical fidelity and what does it mean for God’s church. The moment that we go solo is the time that we are going to negate the possibility of others seeing themselves as full time ministers of the Gospel. This movement is going to need to touch our hearts in terms of driving us away from solo leadership which is going to deny people their rightful calling in the local body of Christ. No one is given all of the gifts and grace that is needed to do the work of ministry for the whole body. That is why you have the whole body. Everyone is given gifts for ministry and service. That is what we are after. So we move from solo leadership to team leadership and this is going to be characterized by giving ministry away to others by equipping them to go and do the work of ministry both here and to the ends of the earth. We are doing all of this. In 1991 a man by the name of Loran Mead wrote a text called the *Once and Future Church*. In this text he clearly tells about the confusion of both clergy and laity faces today. It is an outstanding critiques of the church saying that the paradigm of Christendom now (when the church was given official status in the state). It is where the church had a prominent and influential place in the culture. The church held this position for many centuries, but that is no longer the case now. We are long past that period of time into what we now consider the post-modern period. So, Mead contends that while we have experienced the disintegration and

disruption of the old, we still have confusion within the body of Christ in terms of what model is emerging in what we are called to be. Who are we called to be? We need to understand this issue that everyone is called into ministry. The churches' new understanding will emerge from a new sense of a churches' mission.

Dallas Willard once again was frank in his assessment of the role of clergy. He said that whenever clergy comes to the practical conclusion that discipleship to Christ is optional to membership in the Christian church. That is a Christendom model; all you have to do is to be a member and you are in. Who cares whether you follow Christ or not; this model eventually led to a lot of heartache and heartbreak in the church. Whenever clergy comes to the practical conclusion that discipleship to Christ is optional to membership in the Christian church; we will eliminate the very types of lives that can bring transformation, not only into the local church but also into the culture. Dallas Willard challenges those of us who are pastors and spiritual leaders. He wrote, dare I tell people as believer without discipleship, that they are at peace with God and God with them. Where can I find justification for such a message? Perhaps, most important, do I as a minister have the faith to undertake the work of disciple making. Is my first aim to make disciples or do I just run an operation? This is the clarity of lack, thereof that a solid spiritual life is going to bring into your leadership. Are you just going to be an institutional chaplain? Now, there are places and locations where you really need and want a chaplain; for instance, in a hospital setting or a nursing home setting. God's church, however, was never intended to run on a chaplaincy model. This cannot be primary. Willard says that we are not called just to run an organization. Such an organization is not set up to only meet the needs of those within it. Nothing less than life in the steps of Christ is adequate to the human soul or the needs of the world.

You leaders, pastors and heads of local congregations whether lay or clergy, you are facing one of the more critical decisions of your life. Are you merely going to be an institutional keeper who builds a ministry primarily for yourselves or are you going to step into the high calling facilitating the mature disciples of Jesus, fulfilling the mandate of the Gospel. This is going to require substantial movement for clergy to step away from these attitudes and actions that will bring you to not.

II. Laity

The laity is going to need to make these same kinds of movements. Laity is the people of God that all of us fit into. The people of God has to also make movements, especially with the idea

of self-understanding of just going to church and even less and less regularity. We need to understand that our lives as being the church twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. We have reduced our mental image and our worldview and our understanding of church to buildings or groups of people. It is seriously hampering us. The church is a living reality of people connected to Christ, not a building. Moving from expecting benefits of Christianity with no sustained effort to actually following Jesus; here, is merely about benefits without discipleship. There is no longer any interest in discipleship. We need to truly seek to follow Jesus and implement his rule; we should be intent on being disciples. Instead, there is this idea of being passive observers or rather really consumers. In being passive, it is just there for me, but in terms of my understanding of me have a very critical role within the living body of Christ. That is what is missing. I then understand ourselves as being full time ministers and thus we are part of the mission of salvation for the world. We are just as much a part as any ordained person, full time ministers entering into God's mission. Since the early centuries even as early as the three hundreds, there have been forces driving laity into lifeless roles. This has been a long time, nearly seventeen hundred years of pressing laity to diminished roles. Another Loran Mead text called *Five Challenges for the Once and Further Church*; he wrote in 1996. In terms of chronically over functioning clergy and the equivalent of that is chronically under-functioning laity. This dangerous dependence of laity on clergy is difficult to stop from a sociologically standpoint.

The relationship between clergy laity over the years have built chronic over-functioning in the role of the clergy and under-functioning into the role of the laity. The clergy have come to expect the laity to under-function and the prophecy is self-fulfilling and the laity expects the clergy to over-function and this too is self-fulfilling and neither of them who consider it easy to challenge the depressingly self-replicating pattern of dependence. Now let's go back to Bonhoeffer where he traces it back to the early centuries of the church. 'The church evolved the fatal conception of the double standard, a maximum and a minimum standard of Christian obedience.' He is saying that the church let the laity off the hook; they have allowed them to be lazy. For the professionals, they have to have the standards. This is where the main body fails to pursue costly grace. The laity needs to hear the call of God; the call of the word on your lives is all as Peter tells us that we are chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation; We are God's own people (1st Peter 2:9). If you are thus chosen and royal and holy, you are significant in the eyes of the Lord. We need to see laity take up their calling to follow Christ and serve as ministers to the Gospel and clergy is going to have to go to Scripture to understand how you are reading the word and how you are praying and allowing the Spirit to talk

to you, if you are going to accept what Paul says about your job. Our primary purpose if I understand Ephesians 4 correctly, as a pastor and for me as a seminary professor, is to equip people to take up the role of ministry. My primary purpose was to equip the people of God to do the work of God. Laity, of course, is going to step out in let go of a consumer or passive mentality and move into an active role of worshipping the Lord with all that is in them. They need to commit the entirety of their lives to following Jesus and serving in God's mission.

III. Questions and Answers

Student 1: We try to help our children to understand the difference between going and being. You cannot go to what you are.

Student 2: This is about the relationship between the preacher and discipleship. I am thinking about larger multi-staff churches and let's assume that it is a church that has a very gifted biblical expository preacher. He or she is going to be spending a lot more time in sermon preparation than discipling a group of people. I heard from Gene Gaps the idea that the pastor leads the elders and his primary discipleship group is the elders. Should this gifted pastor of a large church who likes to study should feel guilty about not having a lot of time in discipleship but they should have something.

Lecturer: I have served large congregations where we had to divide out roles; my encouraging word would be that at whatever the size of your congregation with some being mega churches. As long as the pastoral team deeply values the whole discipleship process and making sure that it is going on. One of the best models that I know of along this line is my friend George Acesavito who is the pastor of a large church in Florida. George is the lead pastor and basically George is discipling the other pastors on staff and then they in turn disciple their staff. George is having to manage a very large organization.

Student 3: I just wanted to make one other similar comment. When I was an engineering professor, it was important for everybody who was a teacher to do research and everybody that was a researcher did teaching. You learn how to teach better in doing this. I think this is similar to a lead pastor. You have to keep the discipling going at the same time and those who are doing that need to keep themselves firmly grounded in the Word.

Student 4: I like the idea of the church being 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. In my job, I work closer with a group of people and we need to communicate well on a consistent basis and be able to trust each other. This leads you to have conversations in a natural way, not just work related

but also personal things. In a way that a pastor, anyone who doesn't know those people would never be able to have a personal relationship. So, I find myself trying to pray that I will do a good job and I try to do this purposely and I will be professional in what I do and good in what I do. I want to be present in the moment and aware of those opportunities to have conversations with people that are going to make a difference in their personal and spiritual lives. I have been really blessed to see that over the years the fruit of that has bent ongoing and I have been thankful to see those types of things that are really significant and have eternal value.

Lecturer: You are saying that you are being the church.

Student 4: I feel like the company I work for is paying me to be a pastor.

Lecturer: While we are fielding other questions; one way this works out in terms of pastors letting go. I have great memories of rejoicing over an event where one of our key people was going through a discipleship process ended up with a fairly serious emergency surgery for an aneurism and it wasn't clear whether she was live through it or not. So the first people that the family called when the person went into the hospital weren't any of the pastoral staff but they called the people in their covenant group to come and be with them during that time. Then several hours later into it, they were all there and the lady had made it through surgery and was going to be okay. By midday, someone ask whether anyone had called any of the pastors. So they called me and were apologizing, etc. I was rejoicing because the body of Christ was being the body of Christ ministering to one another and they didn't have to have a professional pastor there. Of course I went to see her. So, they were being the body of Christ.

CHAPTER 25. THROUGH MOVEMENT FOR CLERGY AND LAIT

The sermon is a critical part of the discipleship process. The “through” movement is the process of the “from-to” movement. Each of these steps must be contextualized to your situation. We are aiming for maturity in Christ. As a leader, you love the whole but you only disciple the few. Don't neglect public proclamation but don't see that as the end of your ministry. Daily pray, read scripture, weekly services, small groups acts of service, fasting, giving. Discipleship is helping people integrate the word of God into their lives.

I. The Role of the Sermon

The sermon is a critical part of discipleship and I don't want to separate the two. If you study the sermon, for example that of John Wesley, you will see that there are a fairly large number

of sermons that he never preached. They were for the body of Christ to read so they could understand theology. This is a both/and process; the sermon with upfront teaching; you have to get the content of the Gospel.

II. The Through Movement

What is going to be this important through movement? I want to move through six processes or environments. If you think in terms of environments; some of you may be frustrated in the sense of understanding these things where you want step 1, 2 and 3, etc. But the danger of this, just with any boxed system that you pull off the shelf, it is not contextualized. You have got to contextualize what you are doing to make it appropriate for your setting. I think if I can at least give you the general environments, then it will force you to depend upon the Holy Spirit to contextualize these things. Without this through process, we are not going to be able to arrive at a place where genuine discipleship is taking place and where spiritual leadership is finding its flower. As a spiritual leader, you want to know the fulfillment of Christ in your life. You also want to have the joy of seeing others blossoming and unfolding in that love. There is no greater joy than seeing other people come alive and accept the calling of God that was on their lives and seeing them take up this whole business of following Jesus. So, let's look and talk about those environments. I don't want to come across as being arrogant, but I am not sharing theory here. These are working environments where the Lord enables to take place in congregations with some that I have led myself. These working environments are unfolding and thriving in different places.

III. High Bar Standards

I don't know how you can accomplish much of anything in business or any kind of work or any endeavor you do if you go low bar. That is, if you have small expectations. The first is a historical environment that I find important that goes all the way back to the beginning with Christ. This is a high commitment covenantal structure. We are aiming for maturity in Christ. Any kind of discipleship process that meets its goal in the maturity of Christ and participation in the mission of God will require a high commitment. Sometimes in regards to offering, people will tip God on Sunday; no we are not tipping God on Sunday. We ask for a high commitment for those entering in and by necessity avoid any kind of minimal commitment. Normally, the people who fight the hardest against this in trying to get these concepts across will be the pastors themselves. Pastors will often say that their people will not do that as they are too busy. You can't get them to make that

kind of commitment. I usually just step back and look them straight in the face and tell them that idea is nonsense. The real issue is that they don't want to do that. They don't want to commit themselves to have that kind of high bar discipleship. Jesus asked for nothing less than the totality of our lives! And so, we want to move in that way. Think about what A.B. Bruce said. He wrote the 1871 classic text called the *Training of the Twelve*. He said that those on whom so much depends, it plainly behooves to possess very extraordinary qualifications. The mirrors must be finely polished that are designed to reflect the image of Christ. Yet, as we know the humble fisherman of Galilee had much to learn before they could satisfy these high requirements. So, much that at the time of their apprenticeship for their apostolic work seems all too short.

But then he went on and said, from the words of Jesus and from his actions, we can say that he attaches supreme importance to that part of his work. In other words, it was the training of the twelve. This is not a casual or low bar thing. A concept that is important to understand; in his great love, Christ loved all people. He ministered to the crowds; he healed people and shared his life with people. He loved people so much that he spent time with huge numbers, but in truth, he only disciplined a few. The concept that we need to understand, you love the whole as God loves the whole, but you only disciple the few. One of my few Japanese students told me that her basic understanding within Japanese culture is of one fruit, which is to see one conversion in a lifetime is something to rejoice over. But the point, we are called to intentionally pour our lives into a few people. That is all you can do anyway when it comes down to the more one on one. We don't neglect the crowds, we preach to the crowds. But we seek to integrate this behind the scenes with the disciples. He loved the whole but he only trained the few. I find that we really don't imitate this example well. For hundreds of years, we have been captivated by the allure of public ministry, namely the talking head, one person transferring knowledge to a large body of people. Keep in mind that a good proclamation of the Gospel will indeed do that. But, it is when you just stop there at that point; we simply do not care much for the patient behind the scenes slow process of growing disciples the way that Jesus grew them.

I believe that there is a calling here; it is not to neglect public proclamation and not to see that as the end of your ministry in itself. We need to ask the church to take on the full example of the head of the church. He is the great pastor; he is the shepherd and we want to follow his leadership. We want to be like Jesus when he shared the joys of the kingdom with the crowds, like that on the Sermon on the Mount. I also want to be like Jesus when he shares the application of the sermon with the twelve after they finish up with that sermon. I want to be with Jesus when he meets

with Mary and Martha in their home and in his resurrection life and on the road after his resurrection enlightening them. He is working with a few here and a few there. So the early band of apostles and disciples were trained by Jesus both through public proclamation and by one on one and small group presentations. You see this same thing showing up in some of the great movements of Christianity in history. One of those is the Wesleyan movement; Wesley preached and taught the Gospel wherever he could find an open door. He was rejected and barred from preaching within most Anglian churches in Britain at the time. He preached in city squares, in fields and in cold pits before he had his own places to preach. He didn't try to accomplish by preaching alone. His friend, George Whitfield, was probably a better and more effective preacher than Wesley was. At the end of his life, George Whitfield looked back and said that all the people turned into a rope of sand. He realized that Wesley at that point had the better way by putting societal people into smaller groups of people, but from the beginning for those small groups, there were high bar standards.

So, what do we mean by high bar standards? First we have Intentionality. We have a goal and we are going to intentionally work toward that goal. So, not only intentionality here, but there is going to be frequency of meetings. Don't do discipleship casually; set a standard meetings time and stick to it over a long period of time. At what point do they graduate out of the discipleship process? We never graduate from it. There were daily requirements as well and these revolved around the means of grace. They were expected to pray daily and be in a disposition and life style of prayer. They were expected to be in the Word daily and required not only attend every Sunday but they were required to be in these small groups. They were required also to fast every week and to do works of service and mercy with others within their scope of living. They were required to give a certain minimal amount of giving as well. Tithing was simply a requirement. There was also accountability which involved sharing with others about their prayer life and their study of God's Word. If you are leading one of these small groups, it is important to have everybody on the same page of Scripture every day, to have words of encouragement and enlightenment. When everybody is on the same page, you share what insights the Lord has given you this week. The accountability was to ask about them. When we ask about things, then that shows that we do think that they are important; I have found that people do not take it in a condemnatory sense but they are thankful that somebody loves them enough to care about how they are doing in these areas.

And when they didn't fulfill the covenant as all of this is under a covenant where we ask people ahead of time as how we will live and work together. It revolves around the things we have covered earlier on, such as devotional living, relational strengthening, vocational serving and temple

nurturing. All of that is built into this covenant. You help people and work with them through a process. We have accepted an incomplete mode of discipleship where merely coming to a service has become our default discipleship approach. Yes, we want people to come to church, to a service and certainly God is sovereign and more than capable of growing disciples through church attendance. But he gave us his son to show us the full path of discipleship and if making disciples was one of the most important works of Jesus, I need to learn how to be a disciple and how to share that process and bring others into that discipleship process as well. You will not have people standing in line to go through high bar discipleship processes. Jesus starts out with twelve and ends up with eleven and the world was transformed because of that. Perhaps he will give you three or four or more; that is up to the Lord. But the slow pouring of your life and shepherding of others; it takes about two years to get someone set in the way of being a person of prayer, a person of the Word. There is no weekend approach to any of this; that just doesn't happen that way.

IV. Family Atmosphere

The second climate or environment that I hope to develop will be in context of a family atmosphere. We are thinking that it is like a family moving toward this. One of the great tragedies that you will see in congregational leadership in the life of the leader today is in regards to leaders having friends. When I do clergy conferences where I am just dealing with clergy, I ask how many close friends do they have around you now. This is a North American response; this is different than other places. The usual response is that they don't have any close friends. For the leaders in the body of Christ, the spiritual life is going to lead you into a tight long lasting strong relationship with at least a few others. This business of solo leadership just sets you up to be picked off by the evil one. You become easy prey for the devil. This business is a 'we' and not a 'me'. We need to put people together in family like groups and encourage them and love them and have them to encourage others. We are going to bless them. The disciples ministered together with Jesus; they travelled with him and ate with them. They debated various distractions along the way with him. Who knows how many one on one discussions they had or three on one, etc. They had nearly three years of that. He was available to them; he interacted with them. He spent a considerable amount of time with this small group of people who were in close relationship with one another. One of the greatest gifts you can give someone in your local congregation is to give them the gift of friendship and allow them to have an environment where they are able to develop true friendship; people who pray for one another. They do life together. I think discipleship is best done today the way it was done two

thousand years ago where people learned how to do life together in a committed covenantal community. This is why discipleship is a process, not a program. Programs have a start and endings and there are so many points to it. Discipleship has to transcend any kind of programmatic approach. We need the living body of Christ to actually be present to us. Many people have never experienced someone praying for them and to have someone who they can call in times of joy and in need.

The leader's main job in such a setting like this is not to impart information, not in these small groups in didactic teaching through sermons. Instead you are to help these people into grace and the Gospel into there every day mundane lives and their relationships. So, what does it mean to live out the Gospel in your business and your family and work and neighborhood? There is a winsome and attractive power to the Christian faith that emerges when people within the community of Christ actually demonstrate the love of the Lord to one another. Our eldest child at this moment is a part of a megachurch. I have never been in a church so large. It is in Dallas Texas and it is an awesome church with sound teaching. I have no idea how many thousands are a part of this congregation. But, our Robin is part of a community group and so she has people who also have children. They faithfully meet together to work out the implications of the Gospel in their own lives. Discipleship that unfolds within the context of a small community of people where leaders help set the atmosphere by truly focusing on the spiritual flourishing of those people in that group. This is going to draw others by itself and it may only be a few. But how many does it take to change the world anyway? How do you change the whole culture where you know that the entire culture of this local congregation really needs to be transformed? You just can't force this on anyone; you can only do this by allowing the Holy Spirit transform just a few. Genuine winsome attractive transformation in their lives and they attract others in turn and before you know it, the culture can change through those few.

V. Biblical and Theological Grounding

The third through process involves biblical and theological grounding. I have had to realize that the people in church know very little about their bible and theology. In fact, it is fairly much given that the majority of people that I work with as a pastor really didn't have biblical or theological grounding at all. Now, this discipleship formation can never be reduced to mere technique. The technique is the how we live the Christ life. You don't want the how or technique or the integrating structure to lead it. You want the why in doing this. The why is what the Word of God says and

what Jesus came to reveal to us. We want to know the way, the truth and the light that is Jesus. Frankly, this is why the whole spiritual formation movement today has gotten such a bad response. In some of its circles, you will see people divided into disciplines or techniques first to the neglect of Biblical foundation. So the content or the why is what directs everything. With biblical theological grounding, we want people to know God's Word and what the Lord has to say to us. This is a critical issue for us today and to sum this up, God's people don't know their own story. We want to know our own story; why? The culture will be glad to give us plenty of stories to direct us in terms of how we should live. We want to articulate the great narrative of redemption. We are to give others what we have first received and if you are going to hand anything on, you first have to receive it. Do what Paul says; what we have received from the Lord telling Timothy to guard the good treasure that was entrusted to you (2nd Timothy 1:14). You do this by knowing and loving and living and teaching the way of Christ.

You would hope that we didn't have to cover this today, but you cannot assume that these things are covered. I also want to say something that comes from Dallas Willard. It is somewhat confronting, writing it in the last part of the 20th century. He describes a process saying that we would intend to make disciples and let converts happen rather than intending to make converts and letting disciples happen. For example in the great Wesleyan revival that went through England in the mid to late 1700s, did John Wesley ever have an altar call? No, he didn't, but he did have calls. Now, there is nothing wrong with having altar calls today for I had many. But Wesley called people to attend a discipleship small group. The conversion happened within these discipleship groups. There were substantial conversions. Willard wasn't pointing toward Wesley at this time; he was just saying to get priorities correct. When you make disciples, then conversions are going to take place. People are going to accept Christ; they are going to be deep in the Lord. Rather than trying to make converts and letting disciples happen, instead put your emphasis on the discipleship process when calling people to Christ. Before Wesley instructed his followers in the disciplines of the faith, he ground them in the word and in theology and put them in small groups. But today, we have failed to ground people in biblical faith and the result has been a lack of clarity regarding core Christian doctrine. And then an alarming malaise in large segments of the church, there is a malaise that allows the culture to set the agenda rather than the Word of God. We are seeing a steady rise of agnosticism to outright atheism even in church members. We need to repent of our poor stewardship of biblical theology and get right back into this.

CHAPTER 26. THROUGH MOVEMENT FOR CLERGY AND LAITY (PART 2)

Tozer says we don't have the right of choosing Jesus as Savior and postponing our obedience. Dispositions are something that's part of your daily life. Christian disciplines help us to love God and love our neighbor. Encourage people to seek God's direction for where he wants them to serve. The biblical model is that mature Christians will live as disciplined followers. Make it a goal for pure love to fill your heart and govern your words and actions.

I. Biblical and Theological Rounding

A.W. Tozer says that a notable heresy has come into being throughout evangelical Christian circles; the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to him as Lord as long as we want. No, we don't have the right to postpone our obedience. This is where Dallas Willard comes back to mind; he makes his famous quote regarding such reasoning. He says that it is not reasonable to be a vampire Christian, one in effect says, 'I would like a little of your blood please, but I don't care to be your student or have your character. In fact, please excuse me while I get on with my life and I will see you in heaven.' We can completely agree with Dallas Willard, that in no measure can this be an approach that Jesus finds acceptable. The spiritual life of the leader presses; it isn't a shallow thing; it is not a you and Jesus thing. It is a deepening of your understanding of God's work in God's church. It is a deepening of your application of the Gospel to those you are called to serve. The call to the church in this day and in this age is to recover the full array of the revealed truth of Christ. That is why we must have biblical and theological training? How is it that you can even go to seminary and come out not being biblical and theologically trained to the extent that leads you? It just cannot be. And to integrate that truth to our lives as disciples and into the lives of others, the life of Christ then begins to emerge in individual lives. In these family groups, the life of Christ and the mind of Christ begin to emerge and then people begin to be obedient to the Gospel and as a result, joy happens and the mission of God unfolds and the world is transformed.

II. Formation of Life-Giving Dispositions

In the fourth atmosphere or environment that needs to unfold, this is in the formation of life-giving dispositions. I use dispositions here instead of disciplines; something that is dispositional when it is a part of my daily life. We are justified by faith in Christ as a sheer gift of grace. Nobody earns this. There is absolutely no action on our part that enables us to earn the free gift of Christ.

Yes, we are called to repent and to have faith in Christ; these are conditions where neither one can earn anything. We are also born a new and our nature is transformed by the same gift of God's grace coming into our lives. We cannot work our way into God's favor. Full salvation is unearned and unmerited, yet we are called to cooperate with this grace. Dallas Willard again says as we move from one degree of glory to another (2nd Corinthians 3:18), grace is opposed to earning not effort. We are called to cooperate with what God is trying to be about in our lives. We are not to be quiet; the church has condemned quietism as not being the way of Christ. Quietism says that you step back and do nothing, you just wait.

There are Christian disciplines that we are called to take up if we are going to live in obedience to our Lord. We have to imprint the fact that this is going to be an environment where being with a small group and being a disciple of Christ, then I am going to get over on this side in terms of being mature disciples who are living in the pattern of our Lord. Did our Lord go up into the mountains to pray to his Father? Did he pray in the synagogue and did he pray the psalms? Did he know the Word and explicate the Word? Yes, these things were patterns of Jesus. In all of these things, we are taking on the mind and lifestyle of Christ. He lived in community and close fellowship with others. Sometimes they called him a drunkard because of this. We are taking on the nature of Christ in living in fellowship with people that he loved and took delight in as we should do also. This is a gift to us; we are talking about life giving dispositions and so we are committed to community and devotional living where everyone understands their lives as being completely committed to God in every aspect of their lives. We are on the same page of Scripture every day and praying for one another every day. We are going to worship together and serving together. We are strengthening all of the relationships that we have been talking about. The Christian life will not neglect home and family. The Christian life doesn't neglect those we work with and serve with. How are we loving others with the love of Christ? The whole context of the spiritual life is so important; we meet together regularly and give an account of our lives with the Lord. We are praying for opportunities to share the love of God with others. This is when the kingdom becomes a life for us. Then even throughout the formation of disposition, a mature disciple will find where they are called to serve. And we want to let that service be determined by God, not by filling needs in your local church because you will box God in if you do this.

If you will disciple a person, then eventually the impact of that will be global, not just local. God has a different calling on everyone's lives. The question here is how each person in this group is being called to serve the king and work in partnership with his kingdom? As spiritual leaders, we

should always be really careful to not make our kingdom the kingdom. We want to be careful to know and say that we are not building our own kingdom. There is no room in regards to competition in God's kingdom. In 1st Corinthians 12:27, every member in their place of service is equal before Jesus. We are all the same and in regarding to the afore mentioned temple nurturing; this is life giving. We are called to nutritional sanity where we exercise self-control as it says in 1st Corinthians 9:25. Any natural appetite that the Lord has created us with, this can become self-centered and thus become sinful. We are not to get drunk with wine but be filled with the spirit. There is a warning of living in excessiveness in 1st Peter 4:4 where our god is our stomach in regards to eating too much. Read the Word and let it speak to us for the whole person gets redeemed. We are discipling the whole of our lives, not a part of our lives. So, we have mature Christians who are living as disciplined followers.

III. Sin Nature into the Light

Now, the fifth type of culture that we want to see growing and striving is an environment that we as leaders set. To be repetitive, you have to demonstrate and live the life that you are telling others about. You have to incarnate and embody what you are preaching. We are going to create an environment that will allow the sin nature to be brought to the light. So the sin nature is going to come into the light that is Christ. If someone will actually make the commitment and covenant with you to be in the Word of God every day and to be in prayer and give an accounting of themselves back to you in whether they are actually doing this and what the Holy Spirit is saying to them, God will be able to then do amazing things in your life. But you will also see that people will not enter into some of these disciplines; they just cannot find time to pray or to be in the Word. And you are going to lovingly speak to them and be talking about it. How can we lovingly commit ourselves to one another with having any kind of negative biasness toward anyone? What will come out of this will be openness and desire for people to pray, but above all, we cannot dam others for how they are. But, instead, you celebrate any success a person has over sins or habits or honesty with God. The road blocks to loving God with all that we are and loving others; those difficulties which people go through are going to come out, not in terms of condemnation but in terms of giving the Lord full control of my life. We love John 3:16 and also 3:17, for sure Jesus did not come into the World to condemn the world, instead he came into the world to make possible a restored relationship with the Father which happens through justification. The atonement accomplishes that.

He came here to allow us to have intimacy with himself and with the Father to get this sin

nature to die in our lives. It has to go to the cross with Christ. He came to transform our very characters; to take on our sinful nature. It was nailed to the cross and redeemed and healed and in the resurrection with that kind of power, I too can have those sins taken care of in my life. Wesley said that pure love (loving God for who God is) is filling the heart and governing all the words and our actions. That is the definition of maturity.

IV. The Goal is Spiritual Maturity and Full Participation in God's Mission

Maturity in Christ and participation in the mission of God guides the whole process. We have a goal; it is maturity in Christ which is going to guide the process and then a full participation which is saying yes in God's mission. I am going to grow up in Christ and allow him to grow me up so that I can fully participate in my part of salvation history. I am going to be found in Christ so that I can be sent forth into his kingdom. This is going to guide this process so that the sin nature will be crucified. For some us, it takes a while, but then this full maturity says that I am going to reflect the beauty of who Christ is in my own life. Normally, we want to get straight in terms of who the beautiful people of are for our culture has it all wrong. The beautiful is in those people who have walked a long time with the Lord and who has allowed his beauty to enwrap them and have allowed his goodness to infuse them. Now I am an ambassador of Christ. I understand my life; I totally understand my life as one of being a full time missionary. I am sent on a mission in his kingdom. I am praying that kingdom on a daily basis to come Lord Jesus. The goal of maturity in the Christian life and the participation in the mission of God directs everything that we do. We do this to see kingdom people to come forth at the end. We don't do this in order to try and fulfill what we think ought to be done. We do this in order to take on our Lord's leading to see the twelve that he disciplined; to see the apostles grow up and go out.

So the purpose of the discipleship process, therefore, is to allow the Holy Spirit the opportunity to grow disciples of Jesus. This simply can't be a program to enrich a person or a service opportunity disconnected from the purposes of the Gospel. Discipleship formation is successful when it is fruitful and when it is faithful to both the means and the ends of following Jesus. The goal before us is to grow children, youth, women, and men into people who are actually living in submission to God the Father while actively following God the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Maturity in Christ is where we are headed. Wesley, again, said that we need this kind of maturity and when holiness starts to happen there will be a deep fulfillment and joy and rejoicing in ministry. Genuine Christians are happy in God and rejoicing evermore; they have the witness of the Spirit of God in their hearts saying that they are a child of God. That is called assurance of faith;

they give thanks in everything always lifting up their hearts to God. Such the love for God result in their hearts being full of love to all mankind, he says. We don't have to get into a ghetto mentality or in a sectarian mentality or the party spirit where one party is totally evil. We are called to love all people with the love of Christ. Furthermore, the love of God purifies us from evil passions and from bad tempers resulting in mercy, kindness and humbleness of mind, meekness and long suffering. So the desire is not to our own will but the will of him who sent us.

V. Desired outcomes of the Class

I pray that we have had a good class and that the seeds that were shown will bring forth fruitfulness that you really haven't dreamed of. It is simply to allow the Lord to work in your life as a spiritual leader. This is where we want to get our lives to where we are highly committed to the Lord and living in family covenant and theologically grounded in our own lives. We are doing these dispositions in our lives; we have got the life giving discipline unfolding, not in legalism, but in joy with life flowing into us so that the water level of our own soul are not being drained all of the time. We are allowing Jesus to nail this to where we got to be nailed. Blessed is the person of God who has someone who loves them enough to speak into their lives where they need to be spoken into. Blessed is the woman of God that is loved enough where she will allow someone to speak to her where she needs life. These are good things, not bad things. We want this in our lives not just so that the light of Christ can put to the death the sin nature. As a leader, you are walking in this marvelous place that our Lord wants us to walk so that you as a leader are exhibiting some of the fruit of the Sermon on the Mound. It is where you are leading yourself from a place of maturity and you just go through all of the ways of living in the Sermon on the Mound and then you come to Matthew 5:43. You have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you might be children of your Father in heaven. For he makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, but you if love those who love you, what reward do you have; don't even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more do you do with others. Do not even the gentiles do the same? He then sums up the word to where we want to be, to have the same type of perfect love at work in our lives that the heavenly Father has continually working throughout the world. Be perfect; come to the end of what you are created to be.

Theologians love this great word Telos; it is the end product. You can reach this Telos just by looking at the nature around you, the beautiful trees where you see stability and long term fruitfulness. You see shade and a home for many creatures, for it has grown to what God wanted it

to be. God wants you to be at this place of maturity and what better place to bring you to that place of maturity than where he has placed you in the local church. This is the estuary; this is the atmosphere and environment that God is going to grow me up? Absolutely! Blessed be the name of the Lord who loves you enough as a leader to take you through all sorts of crises! Why? To get you here so that you also will rise up and bless and praise our Lord and then together in the kingdom, we will rejoice for evermore. Amen.

VI. Questions and Answers

When you are talking about the sin nature, I was thinking about all the stories we hear about powerful biblical expository preachers; the whole time they are preaching their hearts are wicked and so you can think that you are mature while your sin nature is still in full control. What I was thinking about as you were laying these things out; it is really the balance of all of these things that we can use as red flags. We can think that our sin nature isn't in control, but if we are not living in a covenantal structure in our family. To use your own words, if we are getting from someone else what we are getting from our spouse then that becomes a check and balance, doesn't it? We can convince ourselves that any of these are true but other ones aren't going to be true and they should become the indicators for the spiritual life of the leader, there is a problem. Is that fair to say?

Yes, that is true. Theologically, it raises a huge issue of what you do with the sin nature; do you repent over the sin nature? No, you repent over sinful actions and movement. The only thing that I know to do with the sin nature is to crucify it with Christ. I can't do this and so I pray for the sheer gift of grace for the sin nature to be crucified with Christ. I think even if God answers that and does crucify the sin nature, it doesn't mean that I cannot be tempted and most certainly I still need to keep growing in Christ. You don't get to the point where you have arrived and I would never go around proclaiming that. I think theologically it is a valid prayer to ask for God to crucify the sin nature. I just have to stand with John Wesley saying that in the new birth, I am giving everything that is needed to be an over-comer in Christ. I do not have to commit sin; I do not have to be the rules and dominating; I don't have to live under the guilt and tyranny of sin. Yet, that sin nature, many times, is not necessarily crucified at that point.

What about we do it this way? We go to Jesus where we deny ourselves and then daily take up our cross and follow him. So, the whole point of living as one who is crucified is a daily disposition, a daily way of living.

You fail at this if you go around saying that you don't sin anymore.

I really appreciate what you said when you first began this section on the Holy Spirit to

contextualize the things in the process because we can logically make up a lot of systems to require certain behaviors or certain actions. There are a lot of groups, clubs and societies that do this. We tend to do this because we want to feel comfortable and to have that feeling of acceptance for whatever reason. I think that not only is this important for this process but it is important personally that we understand that this is the nature of how God relates to us. It is a relationship with us where the Holy Spirit is informing us on a daily basis of what he wants us to know and how it wants us to apply that. We have the Word and there is a plain meaning to Scripture and yet we have things that were written by people two thousand years ago or more that we expect to be able to apply to our lives today. How do we do that? The only way we can do that is rely on the Spirit to apply the plain meaning of Scripture as we live that out every day. So, as we practice that in our lives, we need to practice it with the process to. And as we do that, we contextualize these things wanting to know the steps involved in it but that is not how God works. If we could do that we could depend on ourselves and our own logic to sort this all out. So, as we do the process, we need to depend on the Holy Spirit to contextualize us and that is going to be a moving target all the time. One month, as we have it ready to go, it might change three months later to where we emphasizing something different. As we do that, we need to depend on to act in a way that is consistent with the Spirit to inform us as we go.

Once again to say that it can't be a program in a box. It is not a one size fits all things. The Holy Spirit loves all of us because we are all unique.

We see that as a disadvantage sometimes, because we want to control it, but the point is, that is so freeing and awesome that God is going to work with this as a living thing and he is going to be doing this with living people that we are relating with that which are also changing. All of this is a moving target and to think that we can understand everything about ourselves is pretty optimistic, but then to think that we can understand about what is going on with one or two or three or five hundred other people as they are going through their own stuff. We have to depend on something other than our own logic and understanding. It can only be the Holy Spirit in the lives of people.

From the stand point of being a lay person who has been a participant in some of these small discipleship groups, a lot of times you will see that it is part of our human nature. As you are sitting around discussing and looking at one another's needs, someone will bring up a need and a natural tendency is for other people to give you a pat answer and say that I saw this on u-tube or the Internet and I think you need to do this and this and that and try to fix each other's problems or this is what I did. I think that is a danger and so what we were instructed to do from the very beginning

is don't try and fix one another's problems but just to support and encourage each other and say that the Holy Spirit is the one that needs to direct our lives and to speak truth into our lives first.

We need to have deep respect for the human person; we don't try and shut them up through fixing them with quick easy answers. Basically we can ask how you need us to pray for you about this. Rather than fixing them, we want to know how to pray for them.