

LOOKING UNTO JESUS



Looking Unto Jesus

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

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LOOKING UNTO JESUS #1

“The Purpose of Life”

A. Introduction

- For the next number of weeks, we will be studying 1 phrase/three little words that are written in **Hebrews 12:2**; “Looking unto Jesus.”
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** – “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”
- **Colossians 2:6-19-1** – “Not taken captive by Christ.”
- **John 15:4-5** – So why do we feel like our life is going nowhere; like it has no meaning; I’m doing nothing?

B. God desires a deep, abiding relationship with us.

- God desires for us to know Him *intimately* and that we have a *deep abiding* relationship with Him. (Some words to describe this abiding relationship are: Acknowledging Him, attached to Him, occupied with Him, trusting in Him, resting in Him, depending on Him, and enjoying Him). **Job 22:21**
- "The men who produced the Westminster Confession of Faith in the seventeenth century answered the question "what is the chief end of man" with these words; "***Man's chief end is to glorify God & to enjoy Him forever.***" In **Revelation 4:11**, we read that God created everything (including us) for His pleasure (**Psalm 149:4**) – And His pleasure is that we have a close personal relationship with Him. So how does one obtain and maintain this type of relationship? The Bible is real clear, it all begins with Him and what He has done (**2 Peter 1:3**) and what He is doing (**Revelation 3:20**). God further explains His desired relationship with us in **John 17:18; 20-21**. As we can see from these two scriptures in John, God the Father desires the same relationship with each of His children that he had with His Son Jesus during His life on this earth. Jesus never lost touch with His Father, He constantly acknowledged Him, and depended on Him, and enjoyed Him.

C. Christianity is not a religion, but rather a relationship.

- It would be good for us, at the beginning of this class, to be reminded that ***Christianity is not a religion*** (which is man reaching out and trying to appease and please a holy and righteous God) ***but rather a relationship*** (which is initiated by God pursuing man).

D. *Christians are struggling.*

- Let's be honest, most Christians are struggling in life with many fleshly strongholds such as worry, fear, anxiety, anger, stress, and many of us are striving to live a holy and righteous life, only to realize that we are failing miserably. The Bible is very clear; we are failing because we don't have a deep, intimate, abiding ***relationship*** with God (***Isaiah 26:3***), and the reason for the lack of relationship is because we don't really ***know*** God (***Isaiah 1:2-3***).
- So how does one get to ***know*** God? – ***Proverbs 24:3-4*** helps to explain this process.
- Now let's look at a rather interesting scripture; ***John 17:3*** (God defines eternal life, not as a span of time, but rather a true ***knowledge*** of Him.)

E. *Summarizing the class.*

- Our "Looking unto Jesus" study will have two distinct aspects.
 1. Christianity is not a religion but a relationship (***Revelation 2:1-4***); therefore our goal as Christians should be nothing short of God Himself. However, apart from a God-given revelation of Himself, we can never know God and have that deep, intimate relationship with Him. One of the most awesome facts of Christianity is that God has given to man a full revelation of Himself through His Son Jesus Christ (He that has seen Me has seen the Father - ***John 14:7-9 - Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3***). **In summary of this point, we can know God by "Looking Unto Jesus."** (John 10:30)
 2. God has a natural law in effect that we become like what we focus our attention on. If we look at the world, we become more worldly, but when we look at Jesus, we become like Him – (No longer I but Christ – ***Galatians 2:20***). **So to summarize this point, we can have a Christ-**

like relationship with God by "Looking Unto Jesus." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Therefore, this class is designed to **reveal** and **know** God by looking unto Jesus, and to lift up Christ in such a way that **we will become like Him** and therefore **experience a Christ-like relationship with God the Father.**

So, we could summarize the next 10 lessons in this way;

1. Christianity is not a religion but rather a relationship (**Revelation 2:1-4**).
2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (**John 14:7 –If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.**)
3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Him (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).
4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).

F. Key/basic Scripture for this class

- **Hebrews 12:1:1-2A;** - *“Not only does the Lord Jesus live in us, but he becomes the **motivating Object** of our life as Christians. The law/obedience is no longer our motive or rule of life. It is entirely **displaced by a Person** ‘the Son of God who loves me and gave Himself for me’. Henceforth, the soul has a new center and source; it is no longer self-centered, but **Christ-centered**.” C. A. Coates*

G. Closing quote.

- ***“We are never more deceived than when we think we are living for God, but in fact are living for His blessings; this is the “old way”. When we think our job is to pray properly, live morally, and love meaningfully and that God’s job is to reward us with whatever blessing we want most. In this old way, humility becomes a technique, a maneuver. When the method works, we become rather satisfied with our humility....We share in the glory...We got it right (humility) and God blessed.... What a team. Let’s face it; God has***

rigged the world so that our best gardening efforts can't get rid of all the weeds. The angel with the flaming sword keeps us from returning to Eden when we try to live the old way of discerning what Biblical principles we need to follow in order to get the blessings we want. Nothing we do guarantees the blessings we want. It's true that good parents more often have good kids than bad parents; but not always. Nothing we do makes anything happen. We hear so often that God wants to bless our lives; we're living the old way under the deception of the flesh. The blessing that God longs to give us is Himself. This deception breeds confusion and pressure. "Wasn't I a good enough husband? Is that why she left me? I tried so hard to be a good parent." It also weakens our view of God. We conclude either that we aren't good enough, or that God is not in control (the enemy thing). Old way living does not promote abandoning oneself to God, but rather we find ourselves abandoning God. Often times shattered dreams create an unsolvable pain that causes us to abandon the old way and cling to God and rest in His sovereignty. Only when we are occupied with Christ and the better hope of intimacy with Him will we discover a joy preferred over anything the world has to offer."

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #2
"Four Phases of the Christian Life - Part #1"

A. Class summary;

Let's begin today by remembering our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (reaching out to God) but rather a relationship (God making a way for man to have a relationship with Him) (**Revelation 2:1-4**).
2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (**John 14:7 –If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.”**)
3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).
4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).

B. Paul determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ crucified;

- **1 Corinthians 2:1-2** – If we look to other Christians as examples to follow, we will soon be discouraged by the low standard (We must understand that Looking unto Jesus is not studying His life and then trying to imitate Him). If we look to Jesus as our example, we will be discouraged because of His high standard. Therefore it is essential we understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is not an example to imitate (an imitation is a fake), but rather He is the **source of life** from which we grow (**Colossians 3:4 – Spiritual life flows out of Christ**). **1 Timothy 3:16** – *Great is the mystery of Godliness (God-likeness)*.

C. Old Testament physical picture - A beautiful but barren city

- **2 Kings 2:19** - Here was a beautiful city, but beneath that external beauty was a barrenness.
- When it says that the water was naught (bad), it doesn't mean that there was no water, but rather that it was stale/stagnant.
- And when it says that the ground was barren, it doesn't mean that it produced nothing. If that was so, the city would not have been so beautiful the word barren here means to miscarry.

- Think about this. In the spring, everything was growing beautiful and budding, but just as the fruit was about to ripen it fell to the ground prematurely to rot. This was the heartbreak, the miscarriage of this beautiful city so deceptive, and this is the picture of many Christians today.
- They are good people and they talk the Christian lingo. But, inwardly they are overwhelmed with a sense of defeat, frustration, futility and barrenness. Outwardly no one knows.
- They smile and shake hands and say, "God bless you". They look good on the outside, but inwardly they know what we don't; that for years they have labored in vain.
- The fruit that appears to others has fallen to the ground. **John 15:6** *"If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered"*
- In every church, there are stories of Christians who have served the Lord with every ounce of strength they can muster out of a sense of duty, love and devotion and as the years go by these folks become increasingly more weary, empty, stale, stagnant, fruitless, withered. **(Revelation 2:1-5)**

D. Man's ways are not God's ways

- It's interesting how many different ways Christians find to try and overcome the empty barren wilderness life - some of these ways are more prayer; fasting, confession, accountability. Another big favorite is spending more time in the Word.
- These are good things, but not God's way (*God's way is not to make us stronger and more independent, but rather weaker and more dependent and in need of Him.*)
- The following quote explains this:
"The Holy Spirit knows the most effective way of maturing each life and drawing us into a deeper relationship with Him. Some believers suffer severe financial loss, and the constant need that follows is used by Him to bring us back to the cross where that natural love of self was crucified and our need for Him is revealed. Some experience prolonged physical infirmity/weakness/illness, and this the Holy Spirit uses to cause them/us to return to the truth of our co-crucifixion and die to our self-will, self-dependence and self-pity. Others have social problems with friends and relatives that He uses in order to bring us to the place of dependence on

the finished work of Christ. Whether at home, at school, at work, or at church, He puts us in situations or with persons-that are a thorn in the flesh that sorely try us for the purpose of perfecting our faith in Him; He places the refined with the coarse, the methodical with the slipshod, the fast with the slow, the bright with the dull, the spiritual with the carnal. Inevitably we grate upon one another. However, the Lord will use such situations for great spiritual profit to both. If He does not deliberately bring us into such naturally undesirable situations for our training, then He will use just such trying places into which we have gotten ourselves through our self-will, self-preservation, self-confidence, self-pleasing, and failure to acknowledge and depend on Him.

Possibly some husbands and wives are now in a similar situation in their relationship to one another, or toward their children or their relatives or at work. Don't look to change the circumstances! Look rather to the Lord and by faith, appropriate (take possession of) His finished work (He took us out of Adam and placed us into Christ – we now have a new position in Christ).

Positionally, we have changed our source of life from self to Christ. Your present difficulties are the very means He will use to bring you down into death so that He can form the Lord Jesus' own life in you and draw you into a deeper relationship with Him.” (Romans 8:28, 29)

An interesting quote;

“It's not deliverance from the trial that the Lord Jesus gives. The old way was to put people in the furnace and they were not burnt; they were put into the lion's den and were not eaten; but now we go into the furnace and we're burnt, now the lions eat us up. It's no longer power for us, but rather power in us (Christ in you, the hope of glory – Colossians 1:27). What really hinders many believers is this: we are looking for easy circumstances, looking to the Father to take away the difficulties, instead of looking to him for the grace to endure/the grace to rise above our circumstances/the grace to abide above.” (Relationship)

E. God's way

- Let's go back again to **2 Kings 2** and look at God's solution for a weary, empty, stale, stagnant, barren life. **2 Kings 2:20-22**. Salt at the source was Elisha's solution.

- Keep in mind that salt in the Old Testament is a picture of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. So what is God's solution to a weary, empty, stale, stagnant, barren life? **Jesus Christ, John 15:4, 5; Psalm 42:5 & 11** - What is your problem? Finances; lost your job? Marriage, health? Where is Jesus in all this?
- He didn't just die to get us out of hell and into heaven. (**John 10:10 – I came to give you life, and to give it more abundantly.**)

F. Hungering and thirsting after God

- In modern day Christian circles, we don't hear much about the need to **"be occupied with, and enjoy God"**. It is only as we turn back the pages of history that we become aware of our lack of emphasis on **"being occupied with God"**.
- We find that in days gone by, there were many who were gripped by a hunger and thirst for God. **Psalm 63:1-8; 42:1-2**
- This thirsting after God appears to be lacking today, and it would seem that we have lowered our goal in the Christian life to something far less than God Himself.
- For many of us, we have come to the conclusion that the purpose of the Christian life is to serve God as fully and effectively as possible.
- Techniques and methods by which we hope to serve God have become all important. To carry out this service, we need power, and so in place of a longing for God, our longing is for power.
- So much has service become the center of our thinking that often a man's "walk with the Lord" is judged by success in his Christian work.
- Our service to God, falls far short of the purpose that He has designed for man, that of **looking unto Jesus, being occupied with Christ, and enjoying Him forever.**
- As mentioned the first week, this whole concept of "Looking unto Jesus" began for me while in missionary training in 1990, and as I have studied and prayerfully considered God's growth process into a deeper relationship with Him, it appears that there are really four phases that we go through in the Christian life.

G. Phase #1

- Occupation with our own fleshly desires....James 4:1-3.
- *Let's take a few moments to consider "Self-Occupation vs. Christ Occupation".*

Quote from Dr. W.J. Prost:

- *"The essence (predominant quality) of true Christianity is not to have either high or low thoughts of self, but rather not to be thinking of self at all".*
- And then He quotes **Philippians 1:21** - **"For me to live is Christ"**.
- If we're really going to live the Christian life, then we must be looking unto Jesus/captivated with Jesus/occupied with Him.

Man tends to overlook God

- Let's give some thought to this: Man is an **object** of God's blessing/His free gifts/His grace. And God is the source of man's blessing. (**John 3:27** – **"A man can receive nothing unless it be given to him from heaven"**; **James 1:17** – **"Every good and perfect gift is from above."**)
- But if the blessing/gifts/grace becomes man's **object**, then God, the source of it, is overlooked. **Job 1:8-11** - Notice what's happening here.
- Satan is insisting that God's blessings were Job's **object**, & not God Himself.
- This tendency in man goes all the way back to the fall. It was by proposing to Eve that she would receive a benefit/a blessing/some personal gain, that Satan trapped her. **Genesis 3:4-6**. Notice, personal gain was the primary object in her mind, and in order to obtain it, God was overlooked.
- Now, if this snare/trap was successful in a perfect environment like the Garden of Eden, how much more likely is it to be successful in our present fallen world?

Self-focus

- Now the thing for us to consider is where does the problem begin? ***It really begins when we are an object to ourselves (self-focused).***

- When this is true of us (self-focus), God's blessings become all important, and He Himself is unimportant.
- And this was the warning that the Children of Israel received when they came into the Promised Land. **Deuteronomy 8:12-14**
- And so it happened, the blessings given actually turned their hearts to themselves and the consequence was that God was not only forgotten, but rejected, which eventually led to idolatry/idol worship.
- **It is very possible that you and I are guilty of idol worship? (Worshipping God's blessings/looking for, occupied with personal gain)**

Remember

- In order to best explain all this, let's look at the early years of our Christian lives where most of us will see a lot of childish self-centeredness, which God patiently tolerated. (*I remember praying for health, wealth, good days, etc. –*)
- *My focus was Me --* I was occupied with **my** pleasure, **my** joy and **my** relief.
- I desired from Him the **peace, joy, and benefits** of **my** life in Christ – that's where I was; that's all I knew; and God was aware of it and lovingly tolerated it.

H. Phase #2

- **However, if we are going to grow spiritually, the way up is down.** -- Therefore, in God's own time, the Lord will use that self-centeredness for the purpose of revealing to us a sinful malignancy, a cancer that dwells within each one of us. And at some point, we will begin a downward spiral into the terrible defeat of Romans 7.
- ***This is Phase #2 - Occupation with the wretchedness of our flesh. Romans 7:15-24***

Two powers

- As Christians we are going to be influenced and ultimately controlled by one of two powers; The self life, or the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (**Galatians 5:17**). The first will make life hell and the second heaven. **Jeremiah 17:5-8**

- The flesh/self is the fleshly, self-centered carnal nature that we inherited from Adam, and we all have one. It's ugly, it's horrible - we got it at birth. It will be with us until death and will never change. Vines definition of the flesh, or self, is "human nature deprived of the Spirit of God and dominated by sin".
- And to make matters worse, God sees nothing good in the flesh. **Romans 7:18a**. Even the very best which the flesh can produce, God rejects.
- Notice what Paul says about his flesh - **Philippians 3:4-6**. Paul's flesh was educated, cultured, moral and even religious, yet it was totally unacceptable to God. **Romans 8:8**
- Keep in mind that we do many "good things" in the flesh, but all are unacceptable to God because the source/motivation is not coming from Christ, but from the flesh.

Spiritual blindness

- It is interesting that unlike Paul, few Christians are willing to admit that the flesh/self is controlling their lives; there is a blindness to the subtle, clever, deceitful workings of the flesh.
- If the more horrible sins are absent from our lives, then we tend to rest in a complacent sense of goodness (self-righteousness). We fail to realize how obnoxious to God are the more "culturally" acceptable sins such as (embellishing stories, sarcasm, impatience, worry, etc.). Few people come to **Romans 7:24 – "O wretched man that I am."**
- Martin Luther once said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great Pope, 'Self.'" *And we have within us a wretched tyrant that gives commands and we obey.*

Pig is pig, and flesh is flesh

- Imagine if you will, that I have come to the conclusion that pigs have been grossly misjudged, and that I am convinced that they really don't like wallowing in the mud.
- I have become fully persuaded that all they need is a better environment, education and upbringing. I decide, therefore, to adopt a little baby pig into my family, to prove my point. So I go home and

explain to Sandy that we are adopting this little pig, and I want her to treat it as one of the family.

- We give the little pig a Washington Redskin's sweatshirt and a pair of blue jeans. We teach it to wipe its feet when it comes into the house, to sit up at the table, to bow its head when we say grace, and to sleep at night between the sheets and the blankets in its own little bed.
- It becomes quite obvious to us that it is only a matter of time before we see success. Unfortunately, it is just at this time that somebody leaves the front door open. Like a shot from a gun, the little pig races out that open door, across the yard, and, jumps into the muddiest hole it can find. After rolling over and over, it lies on its back in the mud, little blue jeans and all.
- You see, changing a pig's environment and training it to wear blue jeans and a Redskin's sweatshirt will never change its nature, because a pig is a pig.
- Given half a chance, the nature of a pig is to get back to where it belongs, and this we also find to be true in our own lives... The flesh within us has never ceased to love sin. Given half a chance, it too will go right back to where it belongs and wallow in its sin. **2 Peter 2:22; Proverbs 26:11**

Potential for evil

- This is why the godliest of men still have within them the most terrible potential for evil.
- As a matter of fact, it's probably the godliest of men who know it best. They have learned through experience that flesh does not change for the better by improving it, but rather by crucifying it and as pig is pig, so flesh is flesh.
- **John 3:6** - *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh" - (The only thing the flesh will ever produce is more of the same).*
- Abraham discovered this when he went down into Egypt and lied to Pharaoh - **Genesis 12**. Moses discovered this when he struck the rock - **Numbers 20:1-12**. Samson discovered it in the arms of Delilah - **Judges 17**. David discovered it when he sent Uriah to his death and committed adultery with Bathsheba - **2 Samuel 11**. Peter discovered this when he denied Christ and wept bitterly through the streets of Jerusalem - **Luke 22**.

- And this is ***Phase # 2 - Occupied with the wretchedness of this thing called the flesh.*** We should never be shocked at the amazing capacity for sin that lies within us, ***for this is our nature.*** Pig is pig, and flesh is flesh.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #3
"Four phases of the Christian life – Part 2"

A. Class summary;

Let's begin today by remembering our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (reaching out to God) but rather a relationship (God making a way for man to have a relationship with Him) (**Revelation 2:1-4**).
 2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (**John 14:7 –If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – "I and my Father are one."**)
 3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).
 4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).
- The last time we gathered together, we began looking at the four phases of the Christian life:
 1. **Occupation** with feeding our fleshly desires.
 2. **Occupation** with the wretchedness of our flesh.
 3. **Occupation** with the cross.
 4. **Occupation** with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - We had completed phase #1 last week and had begun phase #2. Let's review the first two phases.

B. Phase #1

- **Occupation with our own fleshly desires....James 4:1-3**

Quote from Dr. W.J. Prost:

"The essence (predominant quality) of true Christianity is not to have either high or low thoughts of self, but rather not to be thinking of self at all".

- And then He quotes **Philippians 1:21 - "For me to live is Christ"**.

Man tends to overlook God

- Man is an **object** of God's blessing/His free gifts/His grace. And God is the source of man's blessing.
- But if the blessing/gifts/grace becomes man's **object**, then God, the source of it, is overlooked. **Job. 1:8-11** - Notice what's happening here.
- Satan is insisting that God's blessings were Job's **object**, and not God Himself.

Self-focus

- The thing for us to consider is this, the problem begins **when we are an object to ourselves (self-focused)**.
- When this is true of us (self-focus), God's blessings become all important, and He Himself is unimportant.
- And this was the warning that the Children of Israel received when they came into the Promised Land. **Deuteronomy 8:12-14**

Remember

- In order to best explain all this let's look at the early years of our Christian lives where most of us will see a lot of childish self-centeredness, which God patiently tolerated. (*I remember praying for health, wealth, good days, etc. –*)
- *My focus was Me.* I was occupied with **my** pleasure, **my** joy and **my** relief.
- I desired from Him the **peace, joy, and benefits** of **my** life in Christ – that's where I was; that's all I knew; and God was aware of it and patiently and lovingly tolerated it.

C. Phase #2

- **However, if we are going to grow spiritually, the way up is down.** -- Therefore, in God's own time, the Lord will use that self-centeredness for the purpose of revealing to us a sinful malignancy, a cancer that dwells within each one of us. And at some point, we will begin a downward spiral into the terrible defeat of Romans Seven.
- ***This is Phase #2 - Occupation with the wretchedness of our flesh. Romans 7:15-24***

- *“Before God can use a man, He will bring him to the end of himself. He must teach him that self-confidence, no matter what it’s form, can only result in defeat. Many of God’s servants have spent years of struggling in the “self-life” before they learned to depend on the Risen Lord Jesus to be their All in All. It’s not very pleasant for one who has been self-sustained and self-satisfied in a moral and religious life, to find that there is not one bit of good in him. We must cease looking for good in ourselves, in order to taste the deep joy of being in Christ.” M.J. Stanford*

D. Phase #3

- However, **In Time**, and I might add again, in **God's time**, the Spirit of Truth/the Holy Spirit will begin to reveal our need for relief from this wretched self-life. He will begin to open our eyes to a deeper truth regarding our co-crucifixion with Christ. **Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20**
- ***This begins Phase #3 - Occupation with the Cross***

The “Cross”

- ***SO, WHAT IS THE KEY INGREDIENT NECESSARY TO MOVE SOMEONE FROM A CARNAL CHRISTIAN TO A SPIRITUAL MAN/FROM PHASE #1 TO PHASE #4? THE CROSS***
- *Death is required to become a phase # 4/Spiritual man.*
- *The cross must come first. **Luke 9:23; Leviticus 8:22-30; Ephesians 4:22-24***
- Many Christians pray for God to make them stronger to overcome sin/the flesh, but this is not God's way. God's way of delivering us from this wretched evil is not to make us stronger and more independent, but by making us weaker and more dependent on Him. **2 Corinthians 12:9,10; Isaiah 40:29.** God sets us free from the dominion of sin not by strengthening our old man, but by crucifying him.
- Remember the day when we saw clearly that Christ died for us; we all should be equally clear as to the time when we saw that we died with Christ, and then reckon it so.
- Notice the repeated statements in **Romans Chap. 6** of our actual identification with the death of Christ. **Verses 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,13**

Miles Stanford quote

- "Fruit springs out of death. Self-centeredness is always barren and solitary. The way of victory is the way of the cross. The Christian names that are honored in history are names that stand over graves where the old man was buried long before the body died."
- It is obvious from Paul's Epistles that his whole life hung on the fact that he was crucified with Christ.

E. Phase # 4

- Now, As we begin to exercise faith in our co-crucifixion with Christ, our position in Christ, reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God (**Romans 6:11**), the result is a growing freedom from the power and reign of sin (**Romans 6:18, 14, 7, 6**)
- However, in the midst of all this growth in "deeper truth," most of us are still more aware/more occupied with the benefactee than the **Benefactor**. We are more occupied with the results of spiritual growth than with the one who grows us.
- **As the Holy Spirit begins to open our eyes to this truth, we are about to enter into Phase #4 - Occupation with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:1-3; 1 John 1:1-5**
- "Some of the worst spiritual distress that I have encountered has been in souls who were eager to be occupied with Christ, and whose great grief was that, in spite of much prayer and effort, they were painfully aware of being self occupied. There must be the learning of what the old man is; the exercise must be gone through in one form or another; but it is an immense encouragement to know that God has taken us up that He might deliver us, and introduce our hearts into the blessedness of conscious association and fellowship with the Lord Jesus." C.A. Coates
- Notice again; "painfully aware of being self occupied. There must be the learning of what the old man is. (1 John 1:6-10)

Looking unto Jesus #4 “Who is this Jesus?”

A. Class summary:

Let's begin today by remembering our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (man reaching out to God) but rather a relationship with the God of the universe (**Revelation 4:11; 2:1-4**).
2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (**John 14:7 – *If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.”***)
3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).
4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).

- Learning Christ – **Ephesians 4:20; Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Peter 3:18**

B. We are now into our fourth week and there is a good possibility that many of us are unable to look unto Jesus/be occupied with Him/abide in Him because we really don't KNOW Him.

- *Oh, we know the name Jesus, we know Him as Savior. But what beyond that? Do we really know Him as God?*
- *It might be good this morning, to think more deeply about Him. – Remember John 14:7 – *If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. John 10:30 – I and the Father are one. John 1:1-5 & 14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3; Matthew 1:23.**

C. Shallow thoughts of Jesus

- Far too often, our thoughts of Jesus are rather shallow.
- **At Christmas**, we think of Him coming to earth as a baby, born in a stable.
- **On Easter**, we think of His dying on the cross and His resurrection.
- **When we sin**, we remember that we must confess our sins to Him.
- **When we're in trouble**, we know enough about Him that we pray to Him.

- ***When we're in church, we know to sing about Him.***
- ***During communion, it's; O yes, we must remember what He has done for us.***

But He seems so distant; it's like He's this mystical character, this far off Savior that we can never really know.

But what is Jesus/God really like?

- Keep in mind that we were created in His image (Soul – mind, will, emotions). He has a mind like ours; what is He thinking right now about me/you? He has a will like ours; what are His desires? And He has emotions like ours; what are His feelings toward you/me? Can we really know? Do we even want to know?

What is His inner being/His inner fabric/His true character?

- This is not a new problem but rather one that was heavy on the hearts of many of the first century people. Even those who had seen Him didn't really realize who He was.
- For example in **Mark 8:27**, Jesus asked His disciples; "*Who do men say that I AM?*"
 1. His disciples responded in verse 28 "John the Baptist; some say Elijah, and others one of the prophets."
 2. In **Mark 4:36-41** - When Jesus had calmed the storm, the disciples made this statement; "What manner of man is this that even the wind and sea obey Him"?
 3. And then there were the clueless Scribes and Pharisees; in **Luke 5:21** – they made this comment; "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies"?
 4. Or the Pharisees in **Luke 7:48-49** - "Who is this man who even forgives sins"?
 5. And let's not forget Herod's question in **Luke 23:3** – "Who are you; are you the king of the Jews?"
- In John 8, Jesus was engaged in a heated debate with the Pharisees, and the argument was over His identity (Who is this guy?)

- His opponents were angry because of His statements, which in their thinking were blasphemous; unless, He really was God, which was something that they had never stopped to consider. **John 8:12-25 & 51-53.**
- **Notice the response of the people - John 8:59. Why? John 3:19-20**

D. **Nobody really knew Him**

- As we can see, **nobody really knew Him.**
- It's interesting that Jesus asked the disciples this question in **Matthew 16:15**; "Who do you say that I am? Peter answered **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** How did Peter come to this conclusion?
- As we study the gospels, Jesus discipleship of Peter is worthy of a deeper look.
- **Christ's ultimate purpose in discipling Peter was to reveal Himself to Peter – He begins in Matthew 4:18-19 (Peter follow Me) & 23-25 (Peter saw Jesus preaching and healing); 8:14-16 (healed mother in law); 14:14-31 (fed 5000 & walked on water); 17:1-6 (Peter witnessed the Transfiguration); John 13:1-9 (washed the disciples feet); Matthew 26:31-41 (Jesus told Peter "before the cock crows you will deny me 3 times); John 18:3-11 (Judas betrayal); Matthew 26:69-75 (Peter's denial); John 20:3-6 (empty tomb); 21:1-7 (Catching fish). Let's turn to John 21:15-18; Joshua 3:3-4.**
- Jesus' discipleship of Peter, brought him to the end of himself; but more importantly, into a true knowledge of Who Christ really was (He is God - **Colossians 2:9**) – ""fullness of the Godhead bodily."
- We can clearly see the difference in Peter's life after the discipleship by Christ – **Acts 3:12-13; 4:8-13; 10;25-26** (No longer denying but exalting Christ.)
- Peter's final words – **2 Peter 3:18** – "**Grow in grace**" – **(the finished work of Christ), "and in the knowledge of Him"** – **(Who He is.)**

E. **Before Abraham was, I Am**

- Let's go back again to **John 8**, and look at one of the most awesome Scriptures when Jesus claimed equality with God - **John 8:58**. If Jesus merely wanted to communicate His pre-existence, He could have said

something like "before Abraham was, **I was**". But He didn't; What He said was, "Before Abraham was, **I Am**".

- With this statement, He is taking us back to that day when Moses, at the burning bush, asked **what name He should give to the God** who was sending him to free his people from Pharaoh's bondage.
- Of course, God's reply was "**I Am that I Am**". Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, **I am** has sent me unto you". **Exodus 3:13-15**
- *Therefore, God's personal name became Jehovah which actually means "I Am".*
- Now when Jesus said the words "**I Am**" In John 8, He was claiming to be God, the great "**I Am**" of the Old Testament.
- He went even further by saying that their eternal destiny would depend on their believing that He is God in the flesh. **John 8:24.**
- *Notice again what Jesus said; "Unless you believe that I Am He."* It's interesting to give some thought to the fact that Jesus could have chosen any of God's names to reveal His deity. But He didn't. Instead, He chose to use the name Jehovah/I Am.
- "**I Am**" is actually an unfinished sentence. It has no object. "**I Am**" - **What?**
- As we look at the overall picture of Scripture, one would almost have to believe that He is saying "**I Am**" whatever my people need. It is as though the sentence is purposely left hanging so that we may fill in the blank.
- Let me ask this question: **Is Jesus Christ all we/you need?**
- Remember Paul's statement in **1 Corinthians 2:1-2? – "I determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ."** **Why?** Because He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end; He is all we need.
Do we lack/need peace? The Bible tells us that "**I Am**" your peace.
Do we lack strength? "**I Am**" your strength.
Do we lack Spiritual life? "**I Am**" your life.
*Do we lack wisdom? "**I Am**" your wisdom.*
- *The name Jehovah is really like a **blank check** and **our faith** fills in what He is to be for us.*
- *So we could say, where there is human need, there is Jehovah/**I Am all you need.***

- Where there is sorrow, misery, unhappiness, suffering, confusion, foolishness, oppression, there is the great **"I Am"** showing up in our lives to be whatever we need (**Acts 14:15-17.**)
- Sometimes in the Old Testament this blank check, "the name Jehovah" is filled in for us.
- Seven times we see the name Jehovah compounded with another word to form His completed name for that particular occasion.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Jehovah-Nissi | "I Am" your banner - Exodus 17:15 |
| 2. Jehovah-Shalom | "I Am" your peace - Judges 6:23 |
| 3. Jehovah-Tsidkenu | "I Am your righteousness - Jeremiah 23:6 |
| 4. Jehovah-Jireh | "I Am" the One Who provides – Genesis 22:14 |
| 5. Jehovah-Rapha | "I Am" the One Who heals - Exodus 15:26 |
| 6. Jehovah-Raah | "I Am" your Shepherd - Psalms 23:1 |
| 7. Jehovah-Shammah | "I Am" the ever present One - Ezekiel 48:35 |

F. I am all you need

- Now our purpose in this study is to fix our attention on the ultimate compound of Jehovah - **Jesus**.
- The name Jesus could be written **JE-SUS**, which could be a compound of Jehovah-Sus which means **"I Am" your salvation**.
- An interesting thought here is if Jehovah means "I Am what you need", eventually God would have to meet our basic need as sinners, and He did that through **JESUS**.
- **God so loved us that He sent Jesus, the brightness of His glory, and the exact image of His person, to meet our great need of salvation.**
- But "Looking unto Jesus" goes far beyond our need of salvation.
- **"Looking unto Jesus" is seeing Jesus Christ, by faith, to be all that I need as a sinner, as a failure, as a poverty stricken weakling, and trusting Him to be that for me in my constant hour of need.**
- What is your present need? Is He enough? Is He all you need?

G. New Testament version of the seven "I Am's"

- It's interesting that Jesus Himself gives us a New Testament version of the seven *I Am's*, **"Who do men say that I AM"?**

1. **I Am** the Bread of Life - **John 6:35** (Sustainer)
2. **I Am** the Light of the World - **John 8:12** (Illuminator - Revealer – bring us out of darkness)
3. **I Am** the Door of the Sheep - **John 10:7** (No one comes to the Father but by me).
4. **I Am** the Good Shepherd - **John 10:14** (Provider & Protects and feeds)
5. **I Am** the Resurrection and the Life - **John 11:25** (Principle of death and resurrection – Dead to self and alive to God **Romans 6:11**).
6. **I Am** the Way, the Truth, and the Life - **John 14:6** (all-sufficient Savior)
7. **I Am** the True Vine - **John 15:1** (Source of life.)

H. ***"I Am the Door"***

- It might be helpful to take a closer look at some of the claims of the "**Great I Am**".
- For example; ***I Am the Door. John 10:9***
- *Here Jesus presents Himself to us as all that we need. "I Am the door".*
- *Those who are outside/excluded, need a "'Door", and Jesus Christ is that "Door".*
- The very fact that Jesus says He is "the door" indicates that there is a barrier which separates us from God; and there is, it's called sin - ***Isaiah 59:2***
- *This barrier has withstood our greatest effort to get into heaven.*
- ***Truly our need is to find a "Door" through this barrier, and it's at this point that Jesus meets us.***
- *He doesn't say "I'll show you the door"; He doesn't say, "come on now and I'll open the door"; but what He does say, "I Am the door".*
- *The Gospel doesn't call us to be like Christ, but rather to come through Christ.*
- *Again and Again we see Paul's epistles punctuated with this phrase "through Jesus Christ our Lord". **Romans 6:11 & 23; 7:25** In other words, God's Grace only comes through Jesus Christ. **John 1:17***
- Turn to a very interesting verse in **John 10:1**. *What an illustration of our anxious efforts to obtain God's blessings/grace. We are not entering by the door, but are striving to climb up some other way; by the way of self-*

improvement, by turning over a new leaf, by determining to pray more and to spend more time reading the Bible. **And while we are climbing so hard, Jesus stands by, availing Himself to be "our door".**

I. "Seeing Jesus as the Way"

- We could say that the picture of Jesus as the door probably belongs at the beginning of the Christian life.
 - What follows now has to do with life beyond "**the Door**".
 - "**The Door**" is not leading us into a house or garden, but rather onto "**a path/a way**" that lies beyond "**The Door**" and the One who had said "**I Am the Door,**" now says, "**I Am the Way**" that lies beyond the door. **John 14:6.**
 - Now a "way" speaks not of a final, settled rest, but rather of a "walk"; and if the Christian life is a "walk", then we need a "path".
 - It was said long ago by the prophets that God Himself would provide us with just such a "path". **Isaiah 35:8-9** Notice again verse 8; "**A highway shall be there, a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness**". **The way** spoken of here, is **the Lord Jesus Himself**, and on either side are swamps of sin, but stretching through them and above them is "**The Way**".
 - *It's interesting that this is how the early church fathers saw the Christian life.*
 - *In the book of acts, they always referred to what they had found in Jesus as "The Way". Acts 9:2; 19:9 & 23; 22:4; 24:14 & 22*
 - *It's obvious from these Scriptures that the early Christians not only regarded Jesus as "The Door", but also "The Way"*
 - **However**, the truth is that many of us Christians who have entered by "**The Door**" are not really walking "**The Way**" at all. We have slipped off that "**Highway**" and are wallowing around in the swamp/wilderness.
 - Basically the problem is that we just don't see Jesus as "**The Way**", and are trying to make other things "**The Way**".
1. Many of us have the idea that prayer is the most important thing in Christianity, and it becomes "**The Way**" for us.
 2. Others, make Bible study "**The Way**".

3. Still others make fellowship, or witnessing, or church attendance, or being a good neighbor **"The Way"**.

- None of these things is **"The Way"**, and if we try to make them **"The Way"**, we will find that the Christian life is very difficult and barren and guilt-ridden.
- Some Christians would say that they don't see any of these things as **"The Way"** themselves, but only as a way to Christ who is **"The true Way"**.
- *There is, however, no way to Christ, for Christ Himself is "The Way"*.
- **We don't need a way to "The Way". It's actually that little way to "The Way" that ultimately defeats us and makes "The real Way" of no effect because we can't get there.**
- Something very important for us to remember is that, the very thing that made Jesus **"The Door"** also makes Him **"The Way"**. It's not His life, or His miracles, or His teaching that makes Him either **"The Door or The Way"**, but rather **The Cross**.

J. "Seeing Jesus as the End"

- Now as we have seen Jesus as **"The Way"**, we must ask the question, "Where does it lead"? What is, or where is **"The End"**.
- This is a very important question because the end that we normally set before us in the Christian life is often very different from **"The one great End"** which God has set before us.
- Often times we read that outstanding men of God who were greatly used by Him, at some point in their lives, were broken and surrendered which made it possible for God to use them mightily. How easy it is for us to think if we go the same route, we will arrive at **the same end**.
- Others of us might have a desire to "get things right with God" thinking that if we do, it will lead to a peaceful and happy life; this is **"The End"** that we have in mind.
- But this is certainly not **"The End"** that Jesus is leading us to.
- Turn with me back to **John 14**, and I think we can see where He is leading us. **John 14:1-9**.
- Jesus surprised the disciples when He said in **verse 4** "Where I go you know, and the way you know". Thomas replied in a sense, "That's just

what we don't know. We don't know where you're going, and we don't know the way".

- The very next comment by Jesus in **verse 6** makes it real clear where He is leading us; ***"I am 'The Way' and no one comes to the Father but by me"***.
- Then He startled them by saying "If you had recognized Me, you would have known the Father also". Philip, quite puzzled joins in at this point and said, "Lord show us the Father, and that will be enough".
- And then we have Jesus awesome answer ***"He who has seen Me has seen the Father. Thus they discovered that, not only did they know 'The Way', but also 'The End' because Jesus is both.***
- We don't have to go beyond Him to something else to satisfy our needs. ***Jesus Christ is "The End" of all that we need, and "The Way" to "That End"***.

K. One out of ten?

- The story of the ten lepers in **Luke 17** is a beautiful illustration of all this. ***Luke 17:11-19.***
- Of the ten, only the one returned to thank and glorify the Lord. The other nine continued on ***their way***, eager to enjoy the new life into which their healing from leprosy had introduced them. ***To them, Jesus was just a means to an end, the end being a life of health.***
- But to the man who fell down at His feet desiring fellowship/relationship with the One Who had healed him, ***Jesus was not only the means, but also "The End"***.

L. Stephen

- Now with all this in mind, please turn with me to Acts 7 and let's look at a beautiful picture of a ***Phase # 4/spiritual man: Act 7:55-60.***
- For the most part, Acts 7 is basically a history lesson given by Stephen to the Sanhedrin focusing on the unbelief of the nation of Israel. However, at the end of his speech Stephen makes a rather strong statement which infuriated his listeners.
- ***Acts 7:51-52 - What we see here are the effects of religion (Man acknowledging his obligation to God) without Christ.***
- *Here are some interesting thoughts by Robert Farar Capon:*

- *"The Gospel of grace is the end of religion (Man's obligation to God). Religion, is a loser, it has a failed past and a bankrupt future. There was no religion (No obligation to God) in Eden, and there will be none in the New Jerusalem; and in the meantime, Jesus has died and risen to persuade us to stop it right now. He has made it real clear that as far as God is concerned, we're all home free already, and there is not a single religious thing that you or I have to do. We are simply invited to believe it".*
- Back to **Acts 7:51-52**. These men were the religious leaders of their day; but in them we see a Godless, Christ-less religion; however, in Stephen we have true Christianity.
- They were full of religious rage; he was full of the Holy Spirit. They gnashed their teeth; his face was like the face of an angel. **What a contrast.**
- **Acts 7:55-56** - Stephen was a man no different than any of us, he was filled by the Holy Spirit which enabled him to fix his gaze earnestly on his glorified Savior in heaven. **This is Christianity. This is a true Christian. This is the Christ life.**
 - 1. He is dead to self and**
 - 2. Full of the Holy Spirit, and**
 - 3. Occupied with a glorified Jesus.**
- **Act. 7:57-60** - Here we see a man surrounded by horrible circumstances, enemies rushing upon him, death staring him in the face. However, instead of being in any way affected or controlled by those circumstances, he is entirely occupied with a Heavenly Object.
- He looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw Jesus - **Colossians 3:1-3**.
- Back to Stephen. As he looked up into that opened heaven, he caught some of the rays of glory that were shining in the face of His risen Lord; and not only did He catch them, but he also reflected them. **Acts 6:15**.
- And then if all this wasn't enough, Stephen was also able to respond with the meekness and grace of Christ. **Acts 7:60**
- Here we see a man who rose above his circumstances, and just like Jesus, could actually pray for his murderers.
- Instead of being occupied with himself and his own suffering, his concern was for those who were killing him.
- **His eye was fixed on glory, He was occupied with Christ. Psalm 57:7**

Looking unto Jesus #5
“We are Complete in Him”
Colossians 2:9-10

A. Class summary:

Let's begin today by remembering our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (Man reaching out to God) but rather a relationship (with the God of the universe) (**Revelation 2:1-4; 4:11**).
 2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (**John 14:7 – If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one;” Matthew 1:23 – “Emmanuel, God with us.”**)
 3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).
 4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).
- "Looking unto Jesus (growing in the **knowledge** of Him –getting to **know** God); being occupied with Christ; Abiding above; that has been our subject for the past few weeks". (Why are we emphasizing this? – **1 Corinthians 1:9- Call to relationship**)
 - However, this life of “Looking unto Jesus”, this deep, intimate, abiding relationship with Him does not seem to come either quickly or easily because there is something standing in the way, and that something is our sin nature/the flesh.

B. Man's sin-nature/flesh

- When sin entered the world at the fall, our relationship with God was broken (if you eat from the tree, God said you will surely die – be separated/broken relationship) and every person from that point on, came into this world with a wretched, fallen, sinful nature and broken relationship with God.
- Now it's important to know that when God saved us, He did not forgive nor take away our sin nature/flesh. He did, however, make a way for us to overcome it; (And that is something that we have mentioned several times the last few lessons. At Salvation, He **positionally** took us out of Adam and **positionally** placed us into Christ, and now because of this

new **position in Christ**, we have been crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, buried with Christ, resurrected and seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father **positionally**. And now our lives are “hidden with Christ in God” **Colossians 3:1-3**.

- Now let's give more thought to **Romans 6:6** and **Galatians 2:20**. (Visual chart)
- Now, although God made a way to overcome the old nature/flesh/the power of sin by our new position in Christ with its new nature, keep in mind, that He left the old nature/flesh/power of sin (whatever we want to call it) intact within each person that was born after Adam and it continues to cause us much misery (**Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17**).
- Some deeper thoughts to ponder – **Isaiah 14:12-14** Lucifer mind-set (I want to be my own God, I want to be in control of my own life, and I don't want anyone telling me what to do) - **Philippians 2:5-8** Christ-like mindset (Gave up being God, I didn't come to do my own will, I came to do the will of the Father, I only do what the Father tells me). God is in the process in all of our lives to mold us into the image of Christ (**Romans 8:29**) and change us from the Lucifer mindset into the Christ-like mindset.

C. Looking unto Jesus

- Now, conditional deliverance from this conflict does not come by looking within ourselves and trying to improve the old nature, but rather by looking to Jesus; to our position in Christ and believing that we are dead, buried, raised, ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, and to know and believe what He has done for us at the cross (setting us free from sin's power through our co-crucifixion with Him – **Romans 6:6** – *Always keep in mind that this is a positional truth*).
- Instead of being occupied with and trying to improve the sin nature/flesh, we are to simply believe (**Colossians 2:6**)/ trust in the finished work of Christ (taken out of Adam and placed into Christ – Placed into His death and resurrection and we are no longer slaves to the flesh/sin's power – **Romans 6:3-7**.)
- However, herein lays a huge problem.
 1. Do we know enough of the character of God to trust Him/to trust what He says in the Scriptures and to hold tight to those truths and wait for Him to do what He promises (**Isaiah 30:18**)? And if we don't, we can expect **Isaiah 50:10-11**.

D. Complete in Him

- Now if Jesus is really God, and if He is all that He says He is, then **Colossians 2:9-10** takes on great significance.
- Notice **verse 9** He is fully God. In Him dwells all the fullness of God. And we have been placed in Christ – (**1Corinthians 1:30**) Therefore, we are complete in Him/in Christ. Complete. Everything is included. Nothing can be added to completeness.
- **2 Peter 1:3** He has given us everything. For example; He has given us the perfect payment for sin (Himself); He has given us His righteousness; He has given us His standing (acceptance/relationship) before God; not to mention His wisdom, righteousness, grace, mercy, love, eternal security and fellowship with the Father. Everything that Christ is and has is ours, and we are complete in Him positionally. As we rest in this finished work of Christ, the Holy Spirit works it out in our condition.
- This includes **A I I T H I N G S**. There is absolutely nothing that can be added. And this "completeness in Him" is the position of not only the oldest, strongest, wisest and most mature Christians, but also the youngest, weakest, most foolish and immature ones. The Apostle Paul does not say we will be complete, or we may at some point become complete, or let's hope and pray that eventually, someday, we'll be complete; quite the contrary. We are complete!!! It is done!! Positionally.
- This is every Christians starting point - Positionally complete in Him. And our part in all this is to believe - **Colossians 2:6**.
- For us to make any effort to gain what God has already freely given to us makes no sense, and furthermore hinders our appropriation of His grace as well as our relationship with Him.
- Remember, our primary focus in this series is "Looking unto Jesus/Occupation with Christ/a deep, abiding relationship with God through Christ." However, we will never attain an intimate abiding relationship; we will never consistently fix our gaze on Him through any effort or striving on our part. It will only come from knowing Him.

E. I would like to spend the rest of this class week getting to know God.
(**Job 22:21**)

**Knowing God – The character of God – Who is He –
What is He really like – Do we even know? (Isaiah 1:2-3)**

Job 22:21; Jeremiah 9:23-24 – (Ephesians 1:17); Act 14:15-17

- The Bible is an auto-biography. It was written by God, about God; specifically to explain the character of God. But we find ourselves studying the Bible to learn about the character of Daniel, or David, or Noah, etc., and we end up knowing little of the character of God (**Romans 1:18-31**). The following quote reveals man's dilemma:
- *“The big question before the church is always God Himself, and the most awesome fact about any man is not what he may say or do, but what he, in the depths of his heart, understands God to be like..... Always the most revealing thing about the church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for often her silence is more eloquent than her speech..... Possibly every error in doctrine or failure to apply Christian ethics could be finally traced to imperfect thoughts about God....The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved from thousands and thousands of temporal problems, for he sees that these problems have to do with circumstances which at best cannot concern him for very long”...*

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #6

“Knowing Him”

A. Class summary:

- Let's begin again today by remembering our summary of the class; Christianity is not a religion (man reaching out to God) but rather a relationship with the God of the universe (***Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2:1-4***).
- Our desire is that the Lord will use our time together each week to reveal Himself through Christ (***John 14:7 –If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.” Matthew 1:23 “Emmanuel – God with us”***)
- Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (***Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18***).
- All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (***John 17:18; 20:21***).

B. Views of Jesus

- This morning again, we want to turn our attention to Jesus and hopefully grow a bit more in our knowledge of Him.
- *If we were to ask 10 people on the street, or for that matter, 10 Christians to share their thoughts about Jesus we'd probably get 10 far different images of Him.*

C. “Blessed is he who is not offended by me”

- It's interesting what Jesus (Remember **Matthew 1:23** – Emmanuel) “God with us” had to say about Himself. He said ***“Blessed is he that takes no offense at Me (is not offended by me).***
- However, reading through the gospels, it's hard to find anyone who, at some point, wasn't offended by Him. Look with me at - **Mark 3:20-21 – (He is mad/out of His mind/He's crazy).**
- Some of the actions and attitudes of Jesus/“God with us” can be rather confusing. For example:
He spent time with Matthew, a dishonest tax collector, and yet He took a whip and cleared out petty thieves from the temple. **John 2:13-16**
He urged obedience to the law, while acquiring the reputation of a law-breaker because He consistently broke the law of the Sabbath.

- He had uncompromising views on rich men and loose women, and yet, both were often found in His company.
- One day miracles flowed out from Jesus, and the next, we read that His power was hindered by man's lack of faith. **Matthew 13:58**
- He fled from arrest at one point, and marched with His face like flint toward it at another time.
- His sometimes bold claims about Himself kept Him at the center of attention, but when He did something miraculous, He hushed it up.

D. Quote by Walter Wink

- **Walter Wink** made this statement some years ago; "***If Jesus had never lived, we could never invent Him.***

E. Some were drawn to Jesus, and some rejected Him

- It's interesting to read the gospels and see the individuals that He drew to Himself. It almost appears that the more despicable the character, the more at ease Jesus was with them. For example;
 1. A Samaritan social outcast in **John 4.**
 2. A woman caught in adultery in **John 8.**
 3. A deceitful tax-collector in **Matthew 9.**
- On the other hand, Jesus was rejected and repelled by some of the more respectable folks such as:
 1. Pious Pharisees who thought Him worldly.
 2. A Rich young ruler who walked away.
 3. Nicodemus who wanted to meet Jesus under the cover of night.

F. Jesus was the friend of sinners

- Jesus was the friend of sinners. ***They liked being around Him, while the self-righteous legalists found Him repulsive.***
- The gospels mention that on eight separate occasions, Jesus accepted invitations to dinner. Three of these were fairly normal social occasions with friends. The other five however, are quite different.
- Jesus dined with Simon the leper. (An outcast) - *Lepers were forced to live outside city walls and yell "unclean, unclean" when approaching anyone.* To make matters worse, during the meal, a disrespectable woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus' head, which prompted

Judas to leave the meal in disgust, going to the chief priest in order to betray Jesus.

- At another dinner with a Pharisee named Simon, another woman anointed Him with perfume, wiping His feet with her hair. The Pharisee was not pleased with the woman's action; however, notice Jesus' response - **Luke 7:44-49**.
- Dinner with a prominent Pharisee where Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath - **Luke 14:1-6**.
 1. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector - **Luke 19:1-10**.
 2. *Levi, another dishonest tax collector - **Matthew 9:9-13***.

G. Searching for clues

- As we search through the scriptures looking for clues that might explain why Jesus made sinners feel comfortable and the pious uncomfortable, we come to the story of a woman caught in adultery (a crime punishable by death).
- **John 8:3-11** - *This scene reveals the heart of Jesus/the heart of God Himself.*
- ***He freely forgives acknowledged sin, therefore the adulteress went away forgiven.***
- *However, the unteachable, blind Pharisees who refused to acknowledge their sin, slithered away stabbed to the heart and un-forgiven. (John 3:19-21)*

H. In God's Kingdom, there are no undesirables

- To the dismay of the religious leaders, Jesus had no problem socializing with children, sinners or Samaritans.
- He touched, and was touched by the unclean, those with leprosy, the deformed, hemorrhaging women, the lunatics and the possessed. Although Jewish law required a day of purification after touching a sick person, Jesus conducted mass healings where He touched multitudes of sick people and never concerned Himself with the Old Testament "rules of defilement".
- Jesus never nagged folks to do the right things, nor did He flatter them, nor coax nor patronize people; He just took them as He found them. ("He knew no man after the flesh" **2 Corinthians 5:16**)

I. The Character of God

- So what do we see in all that we have studied this morning that would reveal the character of God. He cared about help-less and sinful people. Why? Because those were the ones who saw their need for Him. Also, He was extremely relational (which is the character of God).
- He desires a relationship with us - **Revelation 4:11; Psalm 149:4; Revelation 3:20 and Hosea 5:15-6:1 describe how He goes about pursuing the relationship; Add to this 1 Corinthians 1:9**
- Who is He? – **Exodus 3:13-15 (I Am.....all you need) – For all the hurting and sinful people that were being drawn to Christ (the God-man), He was all they needed. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)**
- *“God is always first and God will surely be last....Man in the plan of God has been granted considerable say; but never is he permitted to utter the first word or the last. That is the prerogative of the Deity, and one which He will never surrender to His creatures. Man has no say about the time or place of his birth; God determines that without consulting the man himself. One day the little man finds himself in consciousness and accepts the fact that he is. There his volitional life begins. Before that he had nothing to say about anything. After that he struts and boasts and utters his defiant proclamations of individual freedom, and encouraged by the sound of his own voice, he may declare his independence of God and call himself an “atheist” or an “agnostic”.....Have fun little man, you are only chattering in the interim between the first and the last; you had no voice at the first and you will have none at the last....It should humble us when we remember how frail we are, how utterly dependent upon God (Who is all we need).....” A.W. Tozer*

J. What is He (God/Jesus) really like? –

Ephesians 4:20 “Learn Christ. Matthew 11:28-30 “Learn of Me”
(meek and humble - **Acts 14:15-17) – Book of Jonah**

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #7

Knowing Him Continued

A. Class summary:

Let's begin again today by remembering our 4 point summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (man's effort to please God) but rather a relationship with the God of the universe (**Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Revelation 2:1-4**).
 2. Our desire is that the Lord will use the class to reveal Himself through Christ (**John 14:7 –If you had known me, you would have known my Father; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.”; Matthew 1:23 “Emmanuel – God with us”**)
 3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).
 4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (**John 17:18; 20:21**).
- Again, our subject is, "Looking unto Jesus, being occupied with Christ" - **Hebrews 12:1-3 – (We are to run this race of life “Looking unto Jesus)**
 - Now, when we look unto Jesus, what will we see?
 - Last week we gave considerable thought to the fact that, during His life on this earth, Jesus went out of His way to embrace the unloved and unworthy; the folks who matter not to the rest of the world. (So, when we feel unloved, or unworthy, or like we don't matter to anyone, if we look unto Jesus we'll always find Him with outstretched arms ready to embrace us).
 - All throughout Scripture, we see Jesus reaching out to and spending time with those that the world would call the “nobodies”.
 - In **Luke 8**, one unclean woman who was too shy and full of shame to approach Him face to face, grabbed His robe hoping that He wouldn't notice. **But He did notice - Luke 8:43-48 – (As we look unto Jesus we will not go unnoticed – He even keeps track of the number of hairs on our heads.)**
 - This is the true character of God. Do you know how important you are to God? **Luke 15:4 & 8; Luke 15:11-32** (Prodigal son.)

B. How well do we know Him?

- Now, we have consistently mentioned over the last few weeks, that we will never be occupied with Jesus, never be in awe of Him, never be taken up with Him and never be in love with Him, if we don't **know Him**. (*An intimate knowledge of Jesus is so necessary* - **Ephesians 1:17; Philippians 3:7-10; 2 Peter 3:18**)
- **How well do we know Jesus Christ?** Often we find ourselves appreciating what Jesus has done, and is doing for us, but not really appreciating Him.
- A good example are the people in **John 6:1-2** – They were following Him to see His miracles – They wanted to be entertained, they wanted a circus – They didn't care about Jesus – **Matthew 15:8**
- It's obvious from Scripture that Jesus desires fellowship with us. **He is not looking for us to follow, admire, or occupy ourselves with Him because of what He can do (miracles) or give (health & wealth)**, but rather He delights in those who appreciate Him for who He is. **Psalm 37:4; 1 Samuel 30:1-6** – (Notice that David encouraged himself in the Lord – He wasn't looking for the Lord to change his circumstances – He wasn't looking for a miracle, he was just occupying himself, delighting himself with God.)

C. Jesus turned away from the thrill seekers

- Turn with me back to **Mark 3**: It's interesting the number of places in Scripture where Jesus turned away from the thrill seekers (those who were following Him for His miracles).
- Philip Yancey makes the following comments in his book, The Jesus I never knew: "As I look back on my Christian life, particularly those early years, miracles were important to me (whether it be the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels, or the miracles in my own life that I was constantly praying for. My thinking back then was that prayer was like a vending machine, insert request, and receive a miracle".
- It's interesting that Jesus performed about three dozen miracles, but the gospels seem to downplay them. Often He asked those who had witnessed a miracle to tell no one. (**Mark 3:10-12; Mark 5:41-43; Mark 7:24 & 36; Mark 8:22-26 & 29-30**)
- Jesus seemed to recognize early on that the excitement generated by miracles rarely led to life-changing faith.

- **Faith may produce miracles, but miracles don't necessarily produce faith – Luke 16:30-31** -(In other words, If they don't repent/change their minds after hearing the words of God, miracles won't change their minds either – **Jeremiah 23:29**)
- Again back to **Luke 16:30-31** - It's possible that Jesus had His own resurrection in mind here. (When I return from the dead, many still won't believe)

D. Jesus performed many miracles

- Despite the fact that miracles don't necessarily produce faith, or for that matter any spiritual progress, it's interesting that Jesus performed miracle after miracle after miracle. **Why? Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34.**
- *We can see from these Scriptures that His love and compassion for the people was the motive for His miracles. **This is the character of God.***

The following quote by J.B. Stoney seems rather appropriate; ***“Confidence is greater than devotion. Everyone knows that a good mother would rather hear her child say, “Mother, I believe you would give all the world for me,” rather than “I would give all the world for you.” This is what exists in the true heart of God, and when I know this is truly what He feels about me, then with confidence and boldness I can draw near to Him.”***

- His inner being/true heart of God - God's glory is His goodness to sinful man – **Exodus 33:18-19; 34:6** (merciful/gracious/patient/good & full of truth); **Romans 2:4; Psalm 145:3-9**
- God is Love – **1 John 4:7-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 John 4:19**

“How blessed that our Father is patient and loving and determined in order to utterly detach us from earthly ties and fuse us into a living union with Himself.....His love will not shrink from reducing us to the very dust of despair and death...We may find the whole inward fabric of our lives overwhelmed and burned and blasted to the very extreme of endurance, shrink not fearful soul, this is the Father's undoing of the self life.....”

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #8

“Looking unto Jesus now, only, always, and nothing else”

A. Class summary:

Let's begin today by remembering our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (man searching for God) but rather a relationship (God is the initiator of our relationship with Him) (***Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Revelation 2:1-4***).
2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ (***John 14:7 – “If you had known me, you would have known my Father”***; ***John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.”***; ***Matthew 1:23 – Emmanuel, God with us.***)
3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ (***Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18***).
4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him (***John 17:18; 20:21***).

B. Many people occupied with many things, but only one is occupied with Jesus/Abiding and desiring a relationship with Him.

- Turn with me to **Matthew 26**. In this chapter, we see a number of people occupied with a variety of things.
- First we see the chief priests, elders, scribes, who are occupied with preserving their exalted positions - **Matthew 26:1-5**.
- Then there is Judas and his occupation with money - **Matthew 26:14-16**. Let's not forget Peter and his occupation with self-confidence - **Matthew 26:33-35**.
- But there is one more person to consider here, and that is the woman who brought the alabaster box of precious ointment to anoint the body of Jesus - **Matthew 26:6-13**.
- This woman was obviously drawn to Jesus, obviously occupied with Him.
- She may have been a wretched sinner, but her eyes had been opened to see who Jesus really was which led her to the conclusion that nothing was too costly to be spent on Him.

C. Judas

- It might be interesting to contrast the soul (*mind, will, emotions*) of this woman with the souls of Judas and Peter. (What was she thinking; what

was she desiring, what was she feeling? – What were they thinking, desiring, feeling?)

- To begin with, Judas was a covetous man; he was occupied with money - **John 12:4-6.**
- Judas had physically walked with Jesus during the days of His public ministry, he had heard His words, seen His miracles, and experienced His loving-kindness, and yet he never really knew Him.
- He had a heart for money. The money bag was his nearest and dearest object. Satan, working through the flesh, knew this, he was fully aware at what price he could be bought. He understood his man, how to tempt him, how to use him. **John 13:2**
- ***Think of Judas. Think of his life. Think of his character. Think of his end. Matthew 27:3-5*** He may have proclaimed Christ, but he never knew Him, never believed in Him, and never experienced a close relationship with Him.

D. Peter

- In Peter, we have another warning, though a different kind.
- He appeared to really love Jesus, but that couldn't have been true, because he loved himself more.
- He boasted of what he would do, when he should have been self-emptied. He was fast asleep, when he should have been praying. Instead of trusting and resting, he drew his sword.
- ***He followed Jesus afar off, warmed himself at the high priest's fire, and finally cursed and swore that he never knew Jesus - Mark 14:70-72.***
- Who would have ever thought that the Peter of **Matthew 16:16** (when asked by Jesus who do men say that I Am – and Peter answered Thou art the Christ) was the same Peter we see here in **Mark 14.**
- It's almost certain that Peter would have rejected the opportunity to sell Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, yet he was afraid to confess him in front of a servant girl because his focus was on self preservation.
- He might not have betrayed Him, but he sure did deny Him. He may not have loved money, but he sure loved himself.

E. The woman with the alabaster box

- Let's move on now to the woman with the alabaster box; what a contrast from Judas, Peter, and also the chief priests, elders and scribes.
- **While** the chief priests, elders and scribes were in the palace of the high priest plotting against Jesus, **she was** anointing His body in the house of Simon the leper.
- **While** Judas was agreeing with the chief priests to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, she was pouring out, probably all she had on Him. **She was** totally taken up with the object of her soul, **Jesus**. Why? Because she knew Him and valued Him (**Book of Colossians**).
- Those who didn't know Jesus worth might say her sacrifice was a waste. Those who could sell Him for thirty pieces of silver might talk of giving to the poor, but she paid no attention because she had found her all in Christ (**Philippians 3:7-8**).
- *They might murmur, but she could adore and draw near to Him.*
- She believed that nothing was a "waste" that was spent on Him; He might only be worth thirty pieces of silver to some, but to her, there was no limit to Jesus' worth; **He was all she needed.**

F. Hudson Taylor's "Spiritual Secret"

The following is a portion of a letter written by Hudson Taylor to his sister"

"The last month or so has been, perhaps, the happiest of my life. I may make myself clearer if I go back a little.

My mind has been greatly exercised for six or eight months past, feeling the need personally and for our mission of more holiness, more life, and more power in our souls. I was feeling the ingratitude, the danger, **the sin of not living nearer to God.** I prayed, agonized, fasted, strove, made resolutions, read the word more diligently, and sought more time for meditation – but all with no avail.....Every day, almost every hour, the consciousness of sin oppressed me.

I knew if only I could abide in Christ all would be well, but I could not. I would begin the day with prayer, determined not to take my eye off Him for one moment, but pressure of duties, sometimes very trying, and constant interruptions that were so wearing, caused me to forget Him. Each day brought it's register of sin and failure, and lack of power.

To will, was indeed present with me, but how to perform it I found not.
Romans 7:18b

*Instead of growing stronger, I seemed to be getting weaker and to have less power against sin; and no wonder, for faith and even hope were getting low. **I hated myself and my sin, yet I gained no strength against it.***

I thought that holiness was to be gradually attained by a diligent use of the means of grace. There was nothing I so much desired as holiness, nothing I so much needed; but far from in any measure attaining it. The more I strove after it, the more it eluded my grasp, until hope itself almost died out, and I began to think that perhaps to make heaven sweeter, God would not give it out down here. I do not think that I was striving to attain it in my own strength. Some days I almost believed that He would keep and uphold me; but after looking back in the evening, there was sin and failure to confess and mourn before God.....

***All the time I felt assured that there was in Christ, all I needed, but the practical question was, how to get it out....** He was truly rich, and I was poor; He was strong, but I was weak. I knew that in the root was abundant fatness, but how to get it into my puny little branch was the question. As gradually the light dawned, **I saw that faith was the only requisite,** and was the hand to lay hold on His fullness and make it mine. But I had not this faith.*

***I strove for faith, but it would not come;** I tried to exercise it, but in vain. Seeing more and more the wondrous supply of grace laid up in Jesus, the fullness of our precious Savior, my guilt and helplessness seemed to increase. Sins committed, appeared as trivial compared to the sin of unbelief which was there cause, and could not or would not take God at His word, but rather made Him a liar. **Unbelief was, I felt, the damning sin of the world; yet I indulged in it.** I prayed for faith, but it came not. What was I to do?*

*When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and **the Spirit of God revealed to me the truth of our oneness with Jesus** as I had never known it before. (I quote from memory)*

'But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One'.

As I read, I saw it all! 'If we believe not, He abides faithful'. I looked to Jesus and saw that He had said, 'I will never leave thee'.

Ah, there is rest! I thought. I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more, for has He not promised to abide with me, never to leave me, never to fail me? And Dearie, He never will.

*How great seemed my mistake in wishing to just extract the sap, just the fullness out of Him! Now I was seeing not only that Jesus will never leave me, but that **I am a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.***

*Oh my dear sister, **it is a wonderful thing to be really one with a risen and exalted Savior,** to be a member of Christ! Think what it involves. Can Christ be rich and I poor? Can your right hand be rich and your left hand poor? Or your head be well fed while your body starves? No more can our prayers be discredited if offered in the name of Jesus.....*

*The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being sweeter than another, is **the rest which full identification with Christ brings.** I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize this; for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me; **for in the easiest position He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult His grace is sufficient.** So if God should place me in serious perplexity, must He not give me much guidance; in positions of great difficulty, much grace; in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? No fear that His resources will prove unequal to the emergency! And His resources are mine, for He is mine, and is with me and dwells in me.....*

*And since Christ has thus dwelt in my heart by faith, how happy I have been! I am no better than before, in a sense I do not wish to be, nor am I striving to be. **But I am dead and buried with Christ – Ay, and risen too! And now Christ lives in me, and 'the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me'.***

In other words, don't let us consider Him as far off, when God has made us one with Him....Members of His own body....

And now I must close. May God give you to lay hold on these blessed truths."

G. Theodore Monod's booklet "Looking unto Jesus".

- It might be good for us to give our attention to a little booklet entitled "**Looking unto Jesus**", which was written back in the eighteenth hundreds, by a Frenchman named Theodore Monod.
- Apparently this small book has had a rather large impact on Christianity for many years, and at some point was translated into English and has since been printed and reprinted numerous times.
- Basically, the booklet consists of 47 different "**looks unto Jesus**".
- For example, the book begins with;
- **Looking unto Jesus. In the Scriptures**, to learn there, Who He is and what He has done, and what He gives, and what He desires.
- Let's begin with the question, **what do the Scriptures really say about Jesus? Who is He?**
- It might be helpful to mention that, in the Bible, there are over 100 Scriptural names for Jesus which are placed there for the purpose, "that we might **know Him**" (*Each one of these names for Jesus actually describes a little more clearly who He is.*
- *Today, in America, as a rule, we normally don't put a lot of emphasis on the meaning of a name.*
- *When choosing a name for a new born, most folks either name the child after a special friend or relative, or look for a catchy name that is different and will draw attention to either the child or his parents.*
- However, in biblical times, the meaning of names was very important;
- As we mentioned earlier, there are approximately 117 Scriptural names for Jesus, and **each one is specifically placed there for the purpose of revealing to mankind, just Who Jesus Christ really is.**
- Let's take a few moments to look at some of these names.

1. Advocate - To plead for someone/comforter/counselor. 1 John 2:1		
2. Alpha and Omega- (Author and finisher of our faith) – Revelation 22:13		
3. Angel of the Lord - (Angels are God's messengers who do His will)		
4. Anointed (<i>Appointed</i>)	25. Good Shepherd	46. Purifier
5. Bishop - (<i>Overseer</i>)	26. Head of the Church	47. Ransom
6. Brazen Serpent	27. Heir of all things	48. Redeemer
7. Bread of Life	28. High Priest	49. Refiner
8. Bridegroom	29. Holy One of God	50. Refuge
9. Bright Morning Star	30. Horn of Salvation	51. Resurrection & the Life
10. Captain	31. Jesus	52. Righteousness
11. Chief Shepherd	32. Judge	53. Rock
12. Christ	33. King of Israel	54. Sacrifice
13. Commander	34. Lamb of God	55. Savior
14. Cornerstone	35. Light of the World	56. Second Adam
15. Day Star	36. Lord of Lords	57. Servant
16. Deliverer	37. Master	58. Shepherd
17. Door of the Sheepfold	38. Mediator	59. Son of David
18. Emmanuel - God w/us	39. Messiah	60. Son of God
19. Everlasting Father	40. Mighty God	61. Son of Man
20. Express Image of God	41. Only Begotten Son	62. Teacher
21. Friend of Sinners	42. Physician	63. Way
22. Gift of God	43. Power of God	64. Wonderful
23. Glory of God	44. Prince of Peace	65. Word
24. God	45. Propitiation	

- Again, let's consider Theodore Monod's little booklet entitled "Looking unto Jesus".
- As we mentioned the book consists of 47 different "looks", or ways to "look at Jesus".
- We don't have time to study in detail all of them, but I would like to share a few thoughts briefly and encourage you to give some real thought to this on your own.
- **Looking unto Jesus in the Scriptures. To see who He is.**
- **Looking unto Jesus Crucified.** To know the value of the blood and the cross.
- **Looking unto Jesus to receive from Him,** grace, mercy and peace for each day. **1 Timothy 1:2**
Grace = Getting what we don't deserve - Romans 5:2
Mercy = Not getting what we do deserve - Psalm 136

Peace = Peace w/God - Romans 5:1 Peace from God -

Romans 1:7 Peace of God - Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 3:15

- **Looking unto Jesus to go forth from ourselves and to forget ourselves** - How? The Cross!
- **Looking unto Jesus. Who having returned to the Father's house, is preparing a place there for us**, so that just knowing this truth, we are able to live in hope, and look forward, with peace in our hearts, to that day when the Lord calls us home. **Philippians 3:14**
- **Looking unto Jesus. Whose certain return**, at an uncertain time is the expectation and the hope of the church. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
- **Looking unto Jesus. And not at ourselves**; nor at our opinions, preferences, tastes or desires.
- **Looking unto Jesus. And not at the world.** **1 John 5:4-5**
- **Looking unto Jesus. And not at Satan**; Though he may try to tempt, deceive and accuse us, we won't even waste a glance in his direction if we are living at the foot of the cross and occupied with Christ.
- **Looking unto Jesus. And not at our prayers**, our pious conversations with Him or our holy prayer meetings. (*Many Christians are deceived into trusting in their prayers*)

Looking unto Jesus	And not our position in the church
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our brethren
Looking unto Jesus	And not at His enemies or ours
Looking at Jesus	And not at our circumstances
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our interests
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our good intentions
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our strengths
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our weaknesses
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our sins
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our righteousness
Looking unto Jesus	And not at the law
Looking unto Jesus	And not what we are doing for Him
Looking unto Jesus	And not to our success
Looking unto Jesus	And not to our spiritual gifts
Looking unto Jesus	And not to our sorrow (Pity Party)
Looking unto Jesus	And not at our victories or defeats

<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>And not at our faith</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>And not to our joy</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>And not at our doubts</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>To receive knowledge</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>As long as we remain on this earth.</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>Now</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>Only</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>	<i>.....</i>	<i>Always</i>
<i>Looking unto Jesus</i>		<i>And nothing else</i>

In each book of the Bible, God makes a point to declare Jesus. In the Old Testament It may be a physical picture of a spiritual truth which reveals the character of Christ, whereas in the New Testament it may actually be the person of Christ, but everywhere we look in the Scriptures, He is there.

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

In GENESIS Jesus is the Ram at Abraham's altar

In EXODUS He's the Passover Lamb

In LEVITICUS He's the High Priest

In NUMBERS He's the Cloud by day and pillar of fire by night

In DEUTERONOMY He's the City of our refuge

In JOSHUA He's the Scarlet Thread out Rahab's window

In JUDGES He is our Judge

In RUTH He is our Kinsman Redeemer

In 1st and 2nd SAMUEL, He's our Trusted Prophet

And in KINGS and CHRONICLES He's our Reigning King

In EZRA He is our Faithful Scribe

In NEHEMIAH He's the Rebuilder of everything that is broken

And in ESTHER He is the Mordecai sitting faithful at the gate

In JOB He's our Redeemer that ever liveth

In PSALMS He is my Shepherd and I shall not want

In PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES He's our Wisdom

And in the SONG OF SOLOMON He's the Beautiful Bridegroom

In ISAIAH He's the Suffering Servant

In JEREMIAH and LAMENTATIONS it is Jesus that is the Weeping Prophet

In EZEKIEL, He's the Wonderful Four-Faced Man
And in DANIEL He is the Fourth Man in the midst of a fiery furnace
In HOSEA He is my Love that is forever faithful
In JOEL, He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit
In AMOS He's our Burden Bearer
In OBADIAH our Savior
And in JONAH He is the Great Foreign Missionary that takes the Word of God into all of the world
You go on and you see in MICAH He is the Messenger with beautiful feet
In NAHUM He is the Avenger
In HABAKKUK He is the Watchman that is ever praying for revival
In ZEPHANIAH He is the Lord mighty to save
In HAGGAI He is the Restorer of our lost heritage
In ZECHARIAH He is our Fountain
And in MALACHI He is the Son of Righteousness with healing in His wings
In MATTHEW Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God
In MARK He is the Miracle Worker
In LUKE He's the Son of Man
And in JOHN He is the Door by which everyone of us must enter
In ACTS He is the Shining Light that appears to Saul on the road to Damascus
In ROMANS He is our Justifier
In 1st CORINTHIANS our Resurrection
In 2nd CORINTHIANS our Sin Bearer
In GALATIANS He redeems us from the law
In EPHESIANS He is our Unsearchable Riches
In PHILIPPIANS He supplies our every need
And in COLOSSIANS He's the Fullness of the Godhead Bodily
In 1st and 2nd THESSALONIANS He is our Soon Coming King
In 1st and 2nd TIMOTHY He is the Mediator between God and man
In TITUS He is our Blessed Hope
In PHILEMON He is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother
And in HEBREWS He's the Blood of the everlasting covenant
In JAMES it is the Lord that heals the sick
In 1st and 2nd PETER He is the Chief Shepherd
In 1st, 2nd, and 3rd JOHN it is Jesus who has the tenderness of love

In JUDE He is the Lord coming with 10,000 saints
And in REVELATION, lift up your eyes, Church; for your redemption
draweth night, He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

H. Last week we ended with our class by looking at God's Love for us.

- **God is Love – 1 John 4:7-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 John 4:19**
So what is the truth about God and His love for us?
- **God is for us/Nothing can separate us from His love – Romans 8:28-39; Genesis 39; Psalm 118:6-8; 124:1-2; Ephesians 2:4-7**

I. Conclusion

- As we close today, *let's all take a good look at the object of our hearts.*
- *Are we like the chief priests, elders, scribes, Judas and Peter who were occupied with everything but Jesus, or are we like the woman with the alabaster box who was totally taken up with the object of her heart/soul – Jesus?*

LOOKING UNTO JESUS #9
“Knowing the truth about self leads to knowing Him”

A. Class summary:

Let's begin today by remembering, one more time, our summary of the class;

1. Christianity is not a religion (man searching for God) but rather a relationship (God is the initiator of this relationship with Him) **(Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Revelation 2:1-4).**

Definition of religion: “For the Gospel of Grace is the end of religion, the final posting of the CLOSED sign on the sweatshop of the human race’s constant struggle to think well of itself; for at best, that is what religion is: Man’s well meant, but dim-witted attempt to gain approval for doing odd jobs that he thinks God will thank him for..... Religion, therefore, is a loser.....It has a failed past and a bankrupt future.....There was no religion in Eden (only a relationship with God – He walked with Adam in the cool of the day), and there will be none in the New Jerusalem; and in the meantime, Jesus has died and risen to persuade us to knock it off right now. He has made it real clear that as far as God is concerned, we’re all home free already, and there is not a single religious thing that you or I have to do.....We are simply invited to believe it”..... -Robert Farrar Capon

2. This class is designed to reveal God through Christ **(John 14:7 – “If you had known me, you would have known my Father”; John 10:30 – “I and my Father are one.”; Matthew 1:23 – Jesus Christ is God with us.” John 17:21-23)**
3. Lord willing, the class will result in our becoming like Christ **(Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).**
4. All of this is for the purpose of experiencing the same Relationship with God the Father that Jesus the Son had with Him **(John 17:18; 20:21).**

As the Lord continues to deepen our understanding of the Christ-life, I have recently given much thought to Paul’s comment in Philippians 3:7 – “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” What a total change of attitude in this man’s life. As Saul, before his

conversion, he had much worldly gain; He had gathered many honors for his name; He had made progress in Judaism beyond many of his peers; He had achieved a legal righteousness in which no man could find a flaw; His zeal, his knowledge, and his morality were of the highest order. But from the moment Christ was revealed to him on the road to Damascus, everything changed – Acts 9:3-4

Notice his two remarks in verses 5-6 – “Who are you” & “What would you have me to do.” All of a sudden, what had previously been gain, his righteousness, education, and morality, had now turned to rubbish. Philippians 3:8

The revelation of the glory of Christ had so completely changed the entire thought-life, attitude, and being of Paul, that those things which he had once esteemed positive gain, were now considered as positive loss....

Why? Simply because he had found his all in a relationship with Christ. Jesus Christ had supplanted everything in Paul’s heart. All that once belonged to Paul was now displaced by Christ.

As we grow in our understanding of all that the writer to the Hebrews had in mind in chapter 12 and verse 2 when he said; “looking unto Jesus”, the more completely we are stripped and emptied of everything in which “We” could glory or consider gain. Whatever there may be that tends to exalt self, whether it be righteousness, morality, respectability, wealth, glory, or intelligence, it is an absolute hindrance to our enjoyment/occupation/relationship with Christ

B. Brief review of the first 8 weeks -

Week 1 – We looked at ***the purpose of life***, and determined that man’s chief end is to know, love and walk in relationship with God, and to enjoy Him forever

Week 2 – We discussed ***the 4 phases that God takes us through in order to come to that end;***

1. Occupation with feeding our fleshly desires; **James 4:1-3**

2. Occupation with the wretchedness of the flesh; **Romans 7:14-24**

3. Occupation with the cross; **Romans 6:6**

4. Occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ; **Colossians 3:1-3**

Week 3 – ***“The 4 phases of the Christian life continued –***

Week 4 – “Who is this Jesus” – Jesus asked the question “Who do men say that I Am”? His answer, I Am the Door, the Way, the End; I Am all you need.

Week 5 – We entitled that lesson, “**Complete in Him**” – – He is fully God, and in Him dwells all the fullness of God; because our God given position is in Him, (**1 Corinthians 1:30**) Therefore we are complete in Him. (Man can add nothing to completeness)

Week 6 – “Knowing Him” – We looked at miracles that Jesus had performed, and our conclusion was that although **Faith may produce miracles, miracles don’t necessarily produce faith.** Jesus is not looking for us to follow, or admire, or occupy ourselves with Him because of what He can do (miracles) or give (health & wealth), but rather He delights in those who know Him and appreciate Him for who He is.

Week 7 – “Knowing Him continued” – We spent a considerable amount of time looking at the character of God; and in particular, His love for us.

Week 8 – We looked at the names of Jesus and finished up with Theodore Monod’s book **Looking unto Jesus now, only, always and nothing else.**

C. Quote

- I would like to share another quote with you.
- *“It is the Holy Spirit’s work to turn our eyes from self to Jesus; **From phase #2 through phase #3 to phase #4**; on the other hand, the work of the flesh is just the opposite, for it is ever seeking to occupy us with ourselves rather than Christ and keep us bogged down in Phases 1 and 2.*
- We must remember that it is not our hold on Christ that saves us – it is Christ;
- It is not our joy in Christ that saves us – it is Christ;
- It is not even our faith in Christ, though that be the instrument – it is Christ;
- Therefore, look not so much to our hands with which we are holding on to Christ, but rather look to Christ;
- Look not to our hope – but rather to Jesus, the source of our hope;
- Look not to our faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

- We will never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our works, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are that gives rest to the soul.
 - If we are ever to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, it must be by “Looking unto Jesus”.
 - Keep your eye fixed on Him; resting in His death, His sufferings, His merits, His glories, and His intercession.
 - When you wake in the morning, “Look unto Him”; when you lie down at night, “Look unto Him”.
 - By grace, through faith, “follow hard after Him” – **Psalm 63:8**
-

D. Man’s great problem

- However, there is something standing in our way that keeps us from following hard after Jesus, and that is what we have mentioned numerous times during this class; **the flesh**.
- Now one of the ways that the flesh operates is to deceive us about ourselves. Keep in mind that the flesh has its root and origin in Satan, and Satan is the master deceiver (**John 8:44**).
- It might be good to consider that from the very beginning, even as far back as the Garden of Eden when man was deceived by the serpent, his great dilemma has always been discerning truth.

E. Man’s great need

- We could even go so far as to say that man’s greatest need ***is to know truth - Not only truth about God, but also truth about oneself.***
- The “Grace Message” declares that no matter how dutiful or prayerful we are, we can't help ourselves live the Christian life...Maybe this is the heart of our hang-up, the root of our dilemma. We fluctuate between castigating ourselves and congratulating ourselves because we are deluded into thinking that somehow, we can do it. We develop a false sense of security from our good works and scrupulous observance of the law. Our halo gets too tight, and a carefully disguised attitude of moral superiority results. Or, we are appalled by our inconsistency, devastated that we haven't lived up to our lofty expectations of ourselves. The roller-coaster ride of elation and depression continues. Why? Because we never lay hold of our nothingness before God, and, consequently, we never enter into the deepest reality of our relationship with Him. But

when we accept ownership of our powerlessness and helplessness, when we acknowledge that we are paupers at the door of God's mercy, then God can make something beautiful out of us. -Brennan Manning

- *Remember our subject "Looking unto Jesus" – If we are ever to live a life "Looking unto Jesus" then we must know truth (John 8:32).*
- It's interesting to give some thought to the fact that many Christians still believe the lie today, that we are good people, devoted Christians, and that all is well with us.
In **1 John 1:6-10**, we have three steps that we seem to go through in deceiving ourselves.
- Step 1 is in **verse 6** where we have the words "We lie and do not the truth". *In other words, we give others an impression of us that is not true. **We act out a lie, even if we don't actually tell a lie. There is so much about ourselves that we want to hide.***
- Step 2 is in **Verse 8** - We read "We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". Basically, John is saying that we have acted a lie for so long that we have come to believe our own lie.
- ***We began by deceiving others, and end by deceiving ourselves. At this point, we really do believe that we are the sort of people that we have made ourselves out to be. We see ourselves like the Pharisee in Luke 18:10-12.***
- Step 3 is in **verse 10** - "We make Him a liar". All this has led us to a place where when The Lord shows us our sin/our real selves, we immediately say "that's not true Lord, you're making a mistake, you're pointing to the wrong man". **To say that we have not sinned when God says we have is to make Him a liar.**
- **It is very clear that our first and basic need is to be introduced to ourselves. To know the truth about ourselves as God sees it (First step to salvation is knowing that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves).**

"God created everything out of nothing, and everything which God is to use, He first reduces to nothing.....

All of the spiritual writings of any depth tell of this necessary demolition of self/flesh.....We must die to the self-life, and the cross is the only way....

However, left to my own devices I will not, by faith, appropriate the truth of the cross, but rather I will conduct my own Calvary. I will crucify myself for my own self-motive, and for the sake of proudly displaying to others that I am a poor, suffering, martyred saint, with the purpose of gaining attention and approval.....

Such false humility is a blight on Christianity and characterizes far too many of its leaders. Thomas Merton wrote; "Many actually believe that their pride is the Holy Spirit, and this sickness is most dangerous when it succeeds in looking like humility".....

When a proud man thinks he is humble, his case is hopeless.....

Our role, as we are instructed by the many who have gone before us is to, by faith, surrender and not fight against the wooden stake being pounded into our arrogant, petty, self-centeredness....."

F. "I Am the truth"

- It is at this point that Jesus Christ, again, becomes all we need; **John 14:6** - "**I Am the truth**".
- As we mentioned in one of our earlier lessons, it's important to understand that Jesus is not saying here that He will teach us the truth, or lead us into truth, but that He Himself is truth. **Therefore, if we want to know the truth about ourselves, Look to Jesus, on the cross** where we will see the whole truth about sin, man, and God.
- If we can't see God's estimate of man's ability to help himself anywhere else, we can sure see it at the cross.
- In **Romans 8:3**, we see that Jesus was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, which means that He hung there as a representative of us.
- And, as our representative, He cried out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"? (**Matthew 27:46**)
- *It is plain that God was not forsaking His Son as the Son, but rather He was forsaking His Son as Us, who's likeness He was wearing.*
- **The derelict figure who was suffering on that cross was none other than you and I.** There for all to see is the naked truth about the whole lot of us, Christian or non-Christian.
- If I can't see God's opinion of man's ability to help himself anywhere else, I can certainly see it at the cross.

Quote - "On the one hand, we believe that we deserve only to die and that we are dead in transgressions already. But on the other hand, we think that as long as there is breath in our mouths, we can still be of some use to God. We think that we have failed because we have not been strong enough in our determination and that we will overcome if we do better the next time.....We think that we have failed because we are not watchful and that we will be able to stand up to temptation if we are watchful the next time.....We think that we have failed because we have not rejected temptation and that we will overcome if we reject temptation the next time.....We think that we have failed this time because we have not prayed enough and that we will overcome if we pray more and harder the next time....."

Look at what we are doing.....

God has crucified us on the cross and told us that we are dead.....But we have not seen that we are dead, nor have we acknowledged nor believed that we are dead.....For the most part, we are hoping that the flame that has been extinguished will flicker again if we give it enough fanning.....(This is why we are fanning all the time)

Let's face it, God has lost hope in us; and we must also lose hope in ourselves....

When we lose hope in ourselves, we will see that 'It is no longer I'.....
Watchman Nee

- Truth, both painful and humbling has come by Jesus Christ, to shatter all our vain opinions of ourselves.

"Oh that we might always catch the vision of an abundant harvest, when the great Master Plowman comes, as He often does, and furrows through our souls, uprooting and turning under that which we thought so good, and leaving for our tortured gaze the worthless and the unbeautiful....."

- However, not only has the truth about ourselves come by Jesus Christ, but also the truth about God and His love toward us.
- Left to ourselves, our guilty consciences only tell us that God is the one who sets, for man, impossibly high moral standards, and then He has a big stick that He uses when man fails.

- ***But the cross shows us a different and true view of God; Rather than seeing Him charge us with our sins, we are seeing Him charge our sins to His Son.***

2 Corinthians 5:19 & 21

- *As we look into the marred face of Jesus Christ, we see that God is not against sinners, but for us. In Christ, He has not set unattainable standards, but has come to offer forgiveness and give to us both the power and desire to carry out His standards. **Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:24***
- *Remember, "The law came by Moses, Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ".*

G. Quote by old Brethren writer

“We must travel through needy times for the simple reason that if the Lord Jesus is to be everything, the old man must be nothing, and it is oftentimes a long journey to reach this point in the history of the soul. The Father has to bring the old man to nothingness; and though the flesh can do very well with addition or multiplication, it has a strong objection to subtraction and reduction, and will never tolerate being made a zero. Hence the long, dreary, and painful years of self-occupation (*Phases 1 and 2*) through which many believers drag their slow steps of spiritual progress. One point after another of self-sufficiency and self-importance has to be attacked and reduced, until at last the believer is brought to the end of himself and clearly sees that Christ is everything.”

H. *Last week we ended with our class by looking at God’s Love for us.*

God is Love – 1 John 4:7-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 John 4:19 So what is the truth about God and His love for us?

I. God is for us/Nothing can separate us from His love – Romans 8:28-39; Genesis 39; Psalm 118:6-8; 124:1-2; Ephesians 2:4-7

J. God is my portion – Lamentations 3:24; Psalm 73:26 – He is all I need.

K. God has good things in store for us – Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 8:28; Psalm 139:17

- L. His mercy endureth forever – Psalm 136; 103:8; Lamentations 3:22-23
- M. He'll never leave or forsake us – Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11
- N. God is patient – Isaiah 30:18; Genesis 18:20-33
- O. God is faithful – Deuteronomy 7:9 - God always does what he says; promises are never failing – Lamentations 3:23
- P. He is unchangeable and cannot lie – Hebrews 6:17-18 & 13:8; Psalm 89:34
- Q. God is eternal – 1 Timothy 1:17; Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 90:2
- R. Everything is God's and comes from God – 1 Chronicles 29:11-16
- S. God is able – Ephesians 3:20; Psalm 78:19-20; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25
- T. Abba Father (Pappa) – Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6

Some Scriptures to ponder – Romans 11:33-36; Psalm 100; Hebrews 12:1-2

Foot washing - John 13:1-15

Parables that reveal the character of God

Seed and soil – Matthew 13:1-23

Lost sheep; coin – Luke 15:1-32

Vineyard workers – Matthew 20:1-16

Wedding Feast – Matthew 22:1-14

Pharisee and Tax collector – Luke 18:9-14

What happens when we don't know God – Judges 2:7-11

Conclusion

- As we close today, *let's all take a good look at the object of our hearts.*
- *Are we like the chief priests, elders, scribes, Judas and Peter who were occupied with everything but Jesus, or are we like the woman with the alabaster box who was totally taken up with the object of her heart/soul – Jesus?*

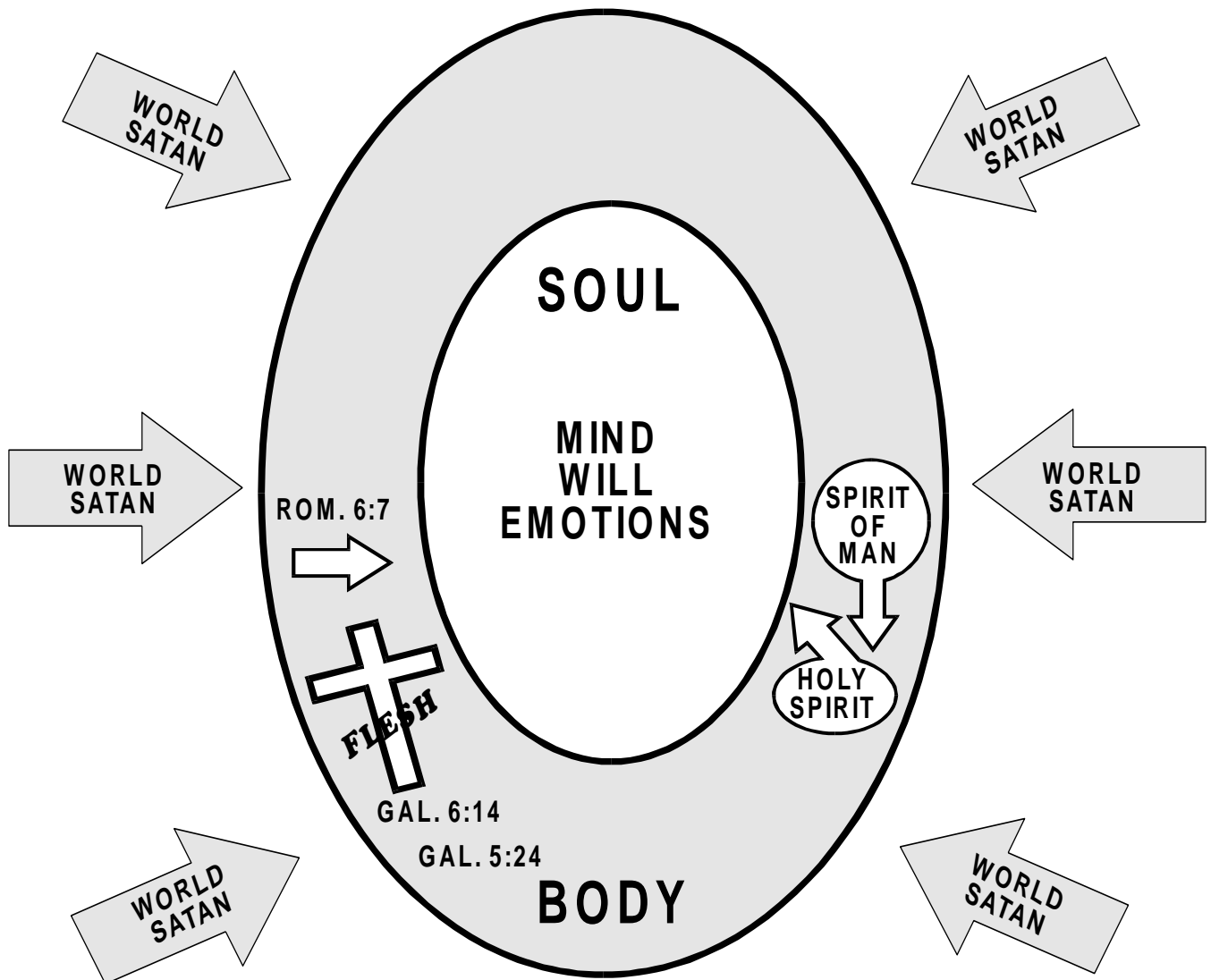
"Faith is the assertion of a possibility against all probabilities, in spite of contrary indication provided by our experience of life or the realities of the world, and in constant battle against temptation (Mark 9:23). What is that differentiates this faith from mere illusion, which breaks down upon the hard rock of reality? It is not a faith which reaches vaguely into the void, but one that firmly trusts Jesus Christ. Such a faith had nothing else than Jesus Christ in the middle of a world that scoffs at all our hopes and fears. It fastens on to Jesus Christ with all the strength at its command, and if the demonic power of the storm becomes overpowering, then the last resources of man's nature give vent to the cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (Mark 9:24) " (E. Stauffer)

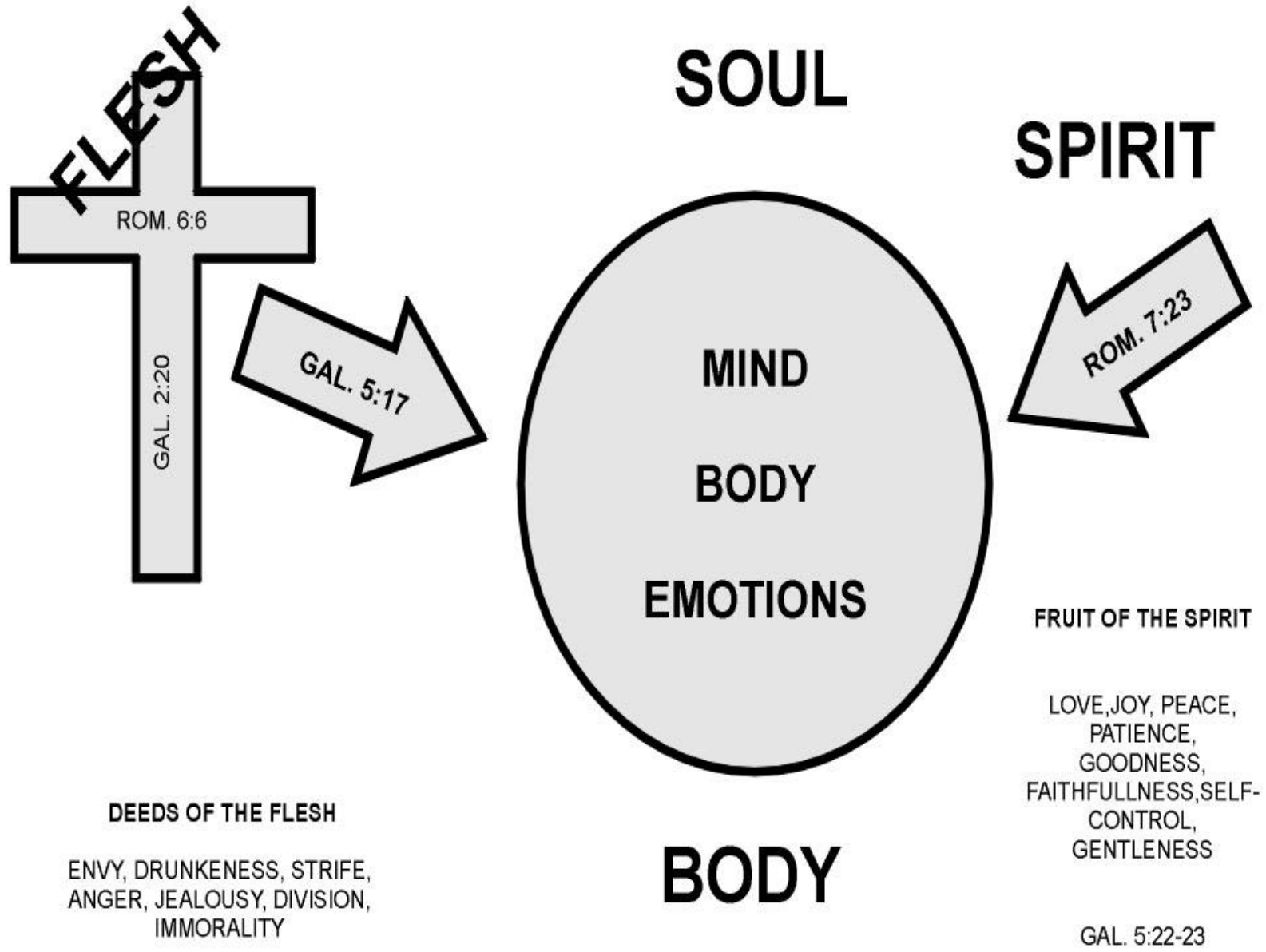
MAN'S 3 ENEMIES

1. WORLD 2. FLESH 3. DEVIL

KEEP IN MIND THAT 2 OF THESE ENEMIES, THE WORLD, AND THE DEVIL ARE EXTERNAL ENEMIES, THAT MUST WORK THROUGH THE FLESH.

MAN





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