

The

Carey Pulpit

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Dear Servant of Our Lord:

With this issue of *The Carey Pulpit*, we provide resources for preaching, information about Carey, and a scholarship certificate for a member of your church. I trust that you will find this information helpful. In addition to the printed information, we continue to offer prayers for all of our alumni who are in ministry. We live in an age when servants of the Lord are under constant attack by the forces of Satan. I call on each of you to form a group of prayer warriors to support each other.

Carey is now completely recovered from the tornado and looking to a bright future. In the year 2002, Dr. Larry Kennedy launched the “Campaign for Excellence” to rally support to help Carey move from the ordinary to the excellent. We have been promoting the annual fund under this theme for the past 17 years. Although it has served us well to motivate us to set goals and achieve more than ever, it is now time to choose a new theme and launch a new era of support. We have chosen the theme “Campaign for the Future.” You will hear more about this and will be invited to support William Carey in prayer, financial contributions, and recruitment of students. The focus of the campaign is for a new College of Health Sciences building. We have outgrown the Fail-Asbury nursing building and are in desperate need of more space. Another great need is to grow our endowment to support student scholarships and academic programs. As always, donors are free to designate their gifts to any area, and we welcome your support of the many programs in need of help.

We look forward to the future with optimism and faith. We march to the theme, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

God bless,

Tommy King

President

Photo on the front cover

WCU President, Dr. Tommy King, stands in the pulpit at Andrew Fuller Baptist Church in Kettering, England. Andrew Fuller was a contemporary and strong supporter of William Carey.

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William Carey University

Education and Church Relations Report

CAREY IS RECOVERING

- Since the January 21, 2017 tornado that destroyed the campus and caused over \$110 million in damage, Carey has repaired all buildings and built seven new buildings, including Tatum Court, the administration building.
- Enrollment has grown in every term since the tornado.
- The large stained-glass window has been redesigned with the text of Psalm 46 which boldly proclaims that “God is our refuge and strength.”

CAREY IS GROWING

- Record enrollment for fall 2018 was 4,911 with 150 international students from 45 countries.
- Enrollment increased 4.6% over last year and 87% over the past 11 years.
- The College of Osteopathic Medicine graduated its sixth class. Nearly 600 medical graduates are now in residency programs, and nearly 200 are practicing physicians.
- The Department of Christian Ministries has grown rapidly with 102 majors in Christian ministry concentrations, intercultural studies, and cross-cultural global management.
- The Doctor of Physical Therapy began fall 2016 and the inaugural class graduates in August 2019.
- The School of Pharmacy welcomed its inaugural class in July 2018 on the Tradition campus.

- Eleven years ago, Carey had seven sports; now it has 17 sports.

CAREY IS COMMITTED

- The BSU provided weekly and special activities which reached nearly 1,300.
- More than 200 students served in community ministries and mission teams.
- The BSU sent 10 students as summer missionaries and 29 on other mission trips.
- BSU and music ministries saw eight professions of faith.
- WCU had 136 church related vocation students.

CAREY IS EXCELLING

- Among regional universities in the South, Carey was ranked a “Top Tier Regional University,” the 2018 **#3 Best Value Regional University in the South**, and one of five universities with “Least Debt of Graduates” by *U.S. News and World Report*.
- Ranked the **Safest Campus in Mississippi**.
- For the tenth year in a row, Carey was selected as a “Military Friendly School.”
- The women’s soccer team is the 2018 NAIA National Champion.

**PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSES
DANIEL 1:1-21**

Introduction:

Some people have a hard time remembering the date they came to faith. Daniel doesn't state the time he came to faith; however, he does state a time something within him changed, and an exact year and place that he purposed something in his heart. Our purposes will only go as far as God's providence and provision will allow, but we can rest assured that when our purposes are aligned with God's plans, we will always find His provision.

I. The King's Plans (Dan. 1:1-7)

- A. King Nebuchadnezzar planned to overthrow Judah and show his power and might.
 - 1. He besieged Jerusalem, captured some of the vessels of the temple and exiled the young, royal Israelite men.
 - 2. Nebuchadnezzar was drunk on power; however, God showed himself as the true, sovereign King. Though everything seems as a loss for Judah and everything seems as gain for Babylon, God is in control, and this exile is the providence of God.
- B. The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord (Prov. 21:1)
 - 1. Through Nebuchadnezzar, God is opening the door to salvation to every tongue, tribe, and nation.
 - 2. Though King Nebuchadnezzar seems to be fully in control, there is another King who guides Nebuchadnezzar and his decisions according to His plan.

II. Jesus Told Him the Truth: Come, Follow Me (Matt. 19:17-21)

- A. Daniel is God's servant and a part of God's plan.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant (Jer. 27:6). Daniel is also God's servant. God invites us in and has called us into an active and purposeful relationship with Him. God hasn't called us to passively watch the action, but to work to fulfill His purposes.

- 2. In God's providence, He has given Jerusalem, Daniel and many others over to King Nebuchadnezzar. Though God is in control, Daniel has an important role.
- B. Daniel has steeled himself to remain faithful to God, despite temptation and consequences.
 - 1. This isn't a robotic purpose, but rather a meaningful and willful purposing by Daniel to achieve God's calling. Daniel's intentions set the tone for all the conflicts and trials he will face.
 - 2. Daniel set in his heart that he would not defile himself by the king's meat, that he would not worship golden statues. He would not stop praying, regardless of the cost.

III. God's Providence (Dan. 1:9-21)

- A. God will provide.
 - 1. Daniel's purpose and God's providence overlap in the final verses of the chapter. It is often difficult to tell the difference between what Daniel is doing and what God is doing.
 - 2. Many plans are in a person's heart, but the Lord's decree will prevail (Prov. 19:21). In Daniel's case, this fact reigns true. We can purpose in our hearts whatever we choose; however, only by God's grace does it come to pass. This is the evidence of God's true and providential will. Whenever we set our hearts and hands to God's purposes we will always find God's provision. King Nebuchadnezzar finds these men 10 times more useful and better than all his enchanters and magicians.

Conclusion:

Daniel purposed his heart to remain faithful to God and was steadfast in his faith for 70 years in exile. Throughout the difficult situations he faced, he always had God with him and God's provision to see him through. Can we say that about ourselves? Have we purposed our hearts to the purposes of God? We have been given the greatest provision and fulfillment of every need in Jesus Christ. Regardless of what comes our way — trials, tribulations, and even death — Jesus Christ is risen and is alive today, on the right-hand side of the Father, making intercession for all those who believe.

THROUGH THE FIRE

Daniel 3:1-30

Introduction:

There is no question that we all face fiery trials in as Christians. Paul tells us in 2 Tim. 3:12 that all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Rather than focusing on when or why we will face those trials, we should instead focus on how we will handle the tribulations and trials we will undoubtedly endure. These three young Hebrew men find themselves in a foreign kingdom surrounded by foreign gods with opposition from every side. Though they face insurmountable opposition and certain death, they stand fast in their faith and trust that God will see them through.

I. Temptations (Dan. 3:1-7)

- A. As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are serving their time during the Babylonian exile, God uses them all in a mighty way. This has come to pass by God strategically placing them all in some very opportune roles and environments. Along with their success and promotions came hatred and jealousy from Babylonian royals.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar has been made aware that he only will be in power for a specific time.
 1. Daniel reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:31-38) and tells him that he is only the golden head to the statue. The full Golden Statue arises in chapter 3.
 2. All must kneel and worship the pagan idol, but a few Hebrew teenagers do not bow. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego decided that they will not fall to such worship, and those who serve under them in this kingdom bring forth charges against these young men.

II. Trials (Dan. 3:13-25)

- A. The trials do not begin in the fire, but rather begin mentally. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in the fire for quite some time. They were given one more opportunity to falter but they stood fast in their convictions. How much more should we today knowing the outcome that death has been overcome?

- B. We all go through the fire time and again as believers. Each time we go through it, the fire seems to be "seven times hotter" than usual. We can rest assured knowing that God is able to bring us out. However, whether or not he does, we still will not fall to pagan idols around us. We also should be assured that regardless of the trial, we will always have a fourth man in the fire with us.

III. Triumphs (Dan. 3:24)

- A. Where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego probably leaped with joy, the text only states that "Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in alarm." Our trials are not merely for personal victory, but also to show His might. The temptations and trials that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced served as a platform for the True Triumphant King.
- B. This triumph also does not just serve the purpose of God showing His power and might, but it also points to His redemptive mercy, grace, and love. Here we find Nebuchadnezzar stumped by God's power, but this exposes a redemptive theme as well. This reoccurring theme throughout the first four chapters of Daniel are God's benevolent grace extended towards King Nebuchadnezzar. Even in God's triumphs there are missional purposes. Chapter four shows this seed fully harvested as Nebuchadnezzar praises God Almighty as the "King of the heavens who is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Conclusion:

We are surrounded in our age by pagan kings, false statues, and idols among and around us. Though there may not be kings in luxurious robes riding horses, we see many in power, wealth, and position that a great number of the world blindly follows, even into idolatry or pagan worship. As we are called to be faithful to God's Word, we are guaranteed to face temptations and trials. God is able to deliver us from them, but if he does not, we must be determined not to fall to them. The triumphs that come, whether they be in life or death, in this world or the next, point to something greater than ourselves; they point to the true and Sovereign King, who has overcome — Jesus Christ.

THE BROKENNESS OF IDOLATRY**Hosea 1: 1-11****Introduction:**

Adultery is a plague in our country. It has broken homes and destroyed the love between families. We hear stories of couples who were married for decades, and loved one another deeply, until one commits adultery against the other. As a result, the family unit is torn apart by an ugly divorce. The children's lives are shattered, and their trust in the adulterous parent is damaged. God compared idolatry against Him to a wife committing adultery against her husband, a point driven home by our modern-day context in which we witness this tragedy all too often. God used the life of Hosea as an example of idolatry in the lives of His people.

I. Broken Rights (Hos. 1:2)

- A. God used Hosea to reveal the hardened hearts of the people of Israel. He told Hosea to go and marry a woman of "whoredom," figurative language used to say she worshipped idols.
- B. His people were worshipping false gods and idols, actions that angered God. They had forsaken God, with whom they had made a covenant on Mount Sinai to follow and worship Him alone. The bride, Israel, had committed multiple acts of adultery against her husband, God, and, as a result, she no longer enjoyed the rights and privileges of the covenant with him.

II. Broken Army (Hos. 1:3-5)

- A. Hosea took Gomer as his wife, and she bore their firstborn son. The Lord told Hosea to name him Jezreel, for He was going to punish the house of Jehu, the anointed King of Israel, who had been commanded to rid Israel of the leaders in idolatry and the worship of golden calves. Jehu killed the leaders, but also disobeyed God by not following his express commands. For his sin, God would punish Israel.
- B. The first son of Hosea reveals the sin of the kingdom of Israel against the Lord and the coming judgment for their sin.

III. Broken Relationship (Hos. 6-9)

- A. The next two children display how badly the relationship between Israel and God had degraded.
 1. The second child was given the Hebrew name for "no mercy." The Lord would no longer show the same compassion and mercy He had previously afforded Israel, but his mercy toward Judah would continue. Shortly after Hosea's prophecy, Israel fell to Assyria and Judah remained intact.
 2. The third child was given the Hebrew name for "not my people." The people of Israel were so deeply entrenched in idolatry and had all but abandoned their worship of God.
- B. Hosea's marriage and family with Gomer tells a tragic story of Israel leaving the Lord, her husband, for false idols, and of the impending judgment of God.

III. Broken Pattern (Hos. 10-11)

- A. We begin to see a shift from a great nation of united people, whose population was innumerable and ruled by one God, to a disjointed group torn apart by invaders. Despite Israel's rebellion, God promised restoration.
- B. This prophetic event was fulfilled through Christ. The one ruler was Jesus the Messiah. Though God's people are often disobedient, Jesus is perfectly obedient and ordained by the Father as the perfect sacrifice to fully restore humanity. He would establish the Kingdom of God that could not be counted by any man.

Conclusion:

It is easy to forget the destructive consequences of sin. Because of our sin, there was no hope for restoration and reconciliation with God through our own actions. Our sinfulness required the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. You have been restored to the Father, and are able to be called his child. Do not allow yourself to go through life without reflecting upon the grace of our Lord. We are a part of an infinite kingdom that cannot be numbered and will never end. We must now go out into this world proclaiming the grace and love of our Savior.

**WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US
Colossians 2:13-15**

Introduction:

In the summer of 2007, my family and I traveled to Yellowstone National Park. While driving through the park, we stopped at several scenic overlooks to admire the beauty of creation. In a similar way, Paul provides us with a scenic overlook of the beauty of what God has done for us in Christ.

I. God Made Us Alive (Col. 2:13)

- A. Our former condition was a broken and sinful one.
 - 1. We were dead because of our sinful condition.
 - 2. Because we were dead, we could not help ourselves. We were unable to make atonement for our sins and break the hold of sin on our lives.
- B. Our present condition is the result of grace and salvation.
 - 1. We were given life when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
 - 2. Because we are alive, we do not need to live any longer under sin's power.

II. God Cancelled Our Debt (Col. 2:14)

- A. We are indebted to God.
 - 1. A certificate of debt refers to a signed promissory note, which is legal proof of one's indebtedness
 - 2. This IOU consisted of "decrees" or the requirements of God that stood against us.
- B. God's provision for our sin came in the form of his son.
 - 1. God not only cancelled the debt, but took it away.
 - 2. Jesus' death on the cross took care of our indebtedness to God.

III. God Gives Us Victory (Col. 2:15)

- A. Christ's death was a resounding victory.
 - 1. When Jesus paid the penalty for sin, he won a decisive victory over Satan.
 - 2. Jesus stripped Satan of his hold on the world and triumphed over him by taking his rightful power and position.
- B. Our salvation through Christ promises a victorious life.
 - 1. Because of Christ's work, we can live above Satan's control.
 - 2. When we understand our identity in Christ, we can live victoriously because through Christ's death, we have overcome the death sentence sin imposed.

Conclusion:

God has done a wonderful work for us. We should be living in its fullness. Make the commitment to appreciate God's work in Christ and to live as a believer in this accomplished work.



U.S. News & World Report
ranked
William Carey University
#3 BEST VALUE
among regional universities
in the South in 2019

LIFE'S GREATEST DIFFICULTY

Isaiah 40:31

Introduction:

What is life's greatest difficulty? We all agree that life is full of difficulties, but I believe life's greatest difficulty is to wait.

I. What Does It Mean to Wait upon the Lord?

- A. To wait upon the Lord expresses two things:
 1. It expresses dependence on God. To wait involves faith and trust in God.
 2. It expresses a willingness to allow Him to decide the terms. We understand that God has a purpose and plan for our lives.
- B. To wait for the Lord is to completely trust in Him with our lives. When we wait on the Lord, we are declaring our confidence in His eventual action.

II. Why Should We Wait for the Lord?

- A. Life is filled with difficulties that we cannot overcome. Our strength is inadequate, but His strength is much more than we could ever require. The Lord's strength is always available and adequate. (Ps 27:14)
- B. Living in such a sinful world drains our lives spiritually, physically, and emotionally. When we are physically and emotionally drained, our spiritual stamina is affected. We must be renewed through Him. (Is 40:31)

III. How Should We Wait for the Lord?

- A. We should wait in His presence. We must have a relationship with God and the desire to live in the presence of God. (Ps 37:7)
- B. We should wait in expectancy. All of the Hebrew words for "wait" carry the idea of an expectant hope. As we wait for the Lord, we do so with a confident expectation. (Ps 33:22)

Conclusion:

Waiting is difficult, but the patience to wait can be found in God as we earnestly seek Him. His grace is sufficient to sustain us as we faithfully and prayerfully wait. Make the commitment to wait upon the Lord.

THE COVENANT KING OF ISRAEL

Zechariah 9:9-11

Introduction:

Christians often forget the role Jesus has played in our lives. It is important to proclaim the Gospel of Christ often to ourselves because of our forgetfulness. Christ is King. He has come to provide peace with God and life for men. Was this God's plan all along? Did God plan to send a Savior like Jesus, humble and righteous? Who is Jesus and what has he brought for us, his people?

I. The Promise of a Liberator (Zech. 9-10)

- A. Israel struggled against its enemies and awaited God's promised judgment against its foes in the form of a king who would remove war and bring peace. What a king! This prophecy was not fulfilled in their time, but it provided hope during the reconstruction of their city.
- B. This king, born hundreds of years later, exerted dominion over all the world and brought peace, but He did so in an unexpected way. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a humble donkey and was crucified a week later, a stark contrast to the usual triumphal arrival and treatment of a long-awaited king. In His death, Jesus brought peace between God and man. In His resurrection, He took dominion over life—raising His people up with Him.

II. The Promise of Liberty (Zech. 9:11)

- A. Because of the blood covenant that God made in Zechariah's prophecy, He set free the prisoners.
- B. The people of God are promised a definite and sure salvation in this covenant with the king.

Conclusion:

Jesus is still setting captives free to be totally captivated with who He is. Five hundred years before his coming, it was prophesied that Jesus would ride a donkey into victory. He died a painful death, bringing peace and reconciliation into the world. Now He lives, bringing many sons and daughters to life eternal with Him.

HUMBLING IN THE PRESENCE OF A HOLY SOVEREIGN

Isaiah 6:1-7

Introduction:

Imagine meeting the President of the United States. What would be your reaction? Would you be overwhelmed by the mere presence of the President? Would you feel as though you were unworthy of such an honor? How would you describe the President to other people? Isaiah has a reaction much like that after his encounter with God, a vision recorded in chapter six. The picture painted by Isaiah is an impressive one and can humble even the most prideful of people.

I. The Exalted Throne (6:1-3)

- A. The throne represents God's sovereignty.
 1. In movies, the king sits on his throne, covered in precious metals and jewels, a clear representation of his wealth, and is surrounded by guards. His opulent clothing and long train, commonly portrayed as vibrant purple and trimmed in white fur, display his majesty.
 2. Although we compare God's heavenly throne with those of mortal kings, the beauty and majesty of the throne of our God is unimaginable.
- B. The angels surrounding the throne recognize their unworthiness.
 1. The Seraphim, unlike the guards who protect the kings in movies, are not present to protect God. They are present solely to sing his praises.
 2. Isaiah describes the seraphim, meaning "fiery one," with six wings. These angels are a majestic sight themselves, yet they shield their faces and feet at the sight of God. Despite their impressive appearance, they too are in awe of their Creator.

II. The Exalted Temple (6:4)

- A. The temple has reverence for God.

1. Have you ever experienced the tremors that accompany an earthquake? As a child, did you ever tremble at the sound of your parents calling your full name? Those reactions are the same response of the temple to hearing the voice of God.
 2. Even inanimate objects know the glory of God and respond accordingly. If the temple quaked at its foundation, how much more should we quake in his presence?
- B. We must recognize our unworthiness and need for reverence toward God, as we are now the temple with the Holy Spirit living within us.

III. The Exalted Lord (6:5-7)

- A. The very presence of God is an overwhelming and unwarranted honor.
 1. Isaiah was in the presence of God. His reaction could have been one of two things: One, to be prideful and say "look at how important I am. God chose to be in *my* presence."
 2. The second is to be in awe of the power and glory of God and realize you are unworthy of the honor. Isaiah chose the latter, admitting he was a sinner who needed God.
- B. We must recognize our need for cleansing.
 1. At the acknowledgment of his own unworthiness, a seraphim responds by cleansing Isaiah of his sin.
 2. Christians should have the mindset of Isaiah. We must realize that we are mere sinners and unworthy to be in the presence of God, yet we can approach the throne with boldness, not through our own righteousness, but because Christ's death has cleansed our sins.

Conclusion:

When you approach the throne of God, are you humbled by His presence? Can you praise God saying "Holy, Holy, Holy?" Will you tremble at his glory and power? Instead of lying to yourself about your own importance or righteousness, be like Isaiah and recognize your sin and need for a savior.

BUILD EACH OTHER UP

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Introduction:

After the tornado struck the campus of William Carey University, numerous churches and Christians came forward to volunteer and donate to help students and the university recover. In contrast, one atheist group contacted us, but the group did not make a donation or offer to help. Instead, they just called to mock and ask why we would believe in a God who would destroy our campus. Initially, I was angry, but then my anger turned to pity as I realized they did not know the blessings of God that come through storms and tribulations. The response of the atheist group raised another question: why had so many Christians who did not even know our students generously help? 1 Thess. 5:11 answers the question. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul teaches about the Second Coming of Christ, and prepares us to live in light of the Day of the Lord, which includes building each other up.

I. Purpose

- A. We Don't Know When the Day will Come (1 Thess. 5:1-3)
 1. When Christ will return is unknown.
 2. Uncertainty of time does not mean uncertainty of return.
- B. His Return Will be No Surprise (1 Thess. 5:4-7)
 1. We are not in darkness.
 2. We are children of light, children of the day.
 3. Be prepared – do not sleep, be awake, be sober
- C. We Belong to the Day (1 Thess. 5:8)
 1. “Since” – matter of fact, certainty of Christ's return
 2. We live differently because of Christ's return
 - a. Let us be sober
 - b. Put on the breastplate of faith and love
 - c. Put on a helmet of salvation
 3. No Christian should live as if Christ will not return or that we are promised another day.
- D. Live with Purpose (1 Thess. 5:9-10)
 1. God created us for salvation

2. God did not create us to suffer His wrath
 - a. We will suffer His wrath if we neglect so great a salvation
 - b. We will suffer his wrath if we reject Him
3. He died for us so that we may live together with Him.
 - a. Died for a purpose
 - b. Died so we could live, live with Him, live together with Him.
 - c. Our purpose is not fulfilled alone, but together

Transition: We were made with purpose and equipped to fulfill that purpose. We are destined to live for God and in relationship with him. Therefore, let us build each other up.

II. Build Up

- A. Encourage One Another (1 Thess. 5:11a)
 1. Encourage
 - a. Listen to yourself – are you an encourager, complainer, or downer?
 - b. We live in a society that takes pride in tearing down
 2. Be encouraged
- B. Build Up (1 Thess. 5:11b)
 1. Purpose – blue print (plans)
 2. Equip
 3. Constructive
 4. Progress / discipleship

II. Each Other

- A. Together (1 Thess. 5:11b)
 1. Church / body of Christ
 2. Community
 3. Missions

Illustration: William Carey told Andrew Fuller – “I will go down, but you hold the ropes.”

- B. Build and Be Built (1 Thess. 5:11b)
 1. Give and receive
 2. We need each other.
- C. As You are Doing (1 Thess. 5:11c)
 1. Not enough just to talk about, plan, or even just say “I'm praying for you.”
 2. Do it now.

Conclusion:

We are the family of God, and the family of God builds each other up.

THE MEDIATOR

I Timothy 2:5-6

Introduction:

As a kid, I always looked forward to summer. My parents would load my sister and me in the car and drive 10 hours to my grandparent's house in Bowie, Texas. My grandparents lived on Amon Carter Lake and for a ten-year-old boy, that place was paradise. I could not wait to get there. Kids today do not understand what traveling long distances was like for a kid in those days without music, movies, or video games. When I was a kid, you had very few choices. You could read a book, play made-up games, or sit silently and listen to your parents talk. My sister held a black belt in "torture-little-brother-Kwando." The back seat of the car was divided, and it was a standing rule that you do not cross over the center line. Being an expert in "torture-little-brother-Kwando," my sister would put her finger right up to the edge of the middle of the seat and just stare at me. She knew it was driving me crazy. Needless to say, a fight ensued. My mother, loving both of us, would mediate. She was qualified to mediate because she gave birth to my mean sister and me.

Our sin has separated us from God. Our relationship with Him is broken. Isaiah 59:2 states that your "iniquities have built barriers between you and your God..." Just as I attempted to win my mother to my side as a child embroiled in a sibling argument, we wrongly attempt to negotiate with God on our own behalf by putting forth arguments.

I. The Good Person Argument

- A. We explain to God what a good person we are.
- B. We provide evidence for our goodness.
 1. We tithe, volunteer, go to church.
 2. We don't commit the major sins.
- C. We negotiate our morality as a means to fix our relationship with God
 1. Our definition of goodness is flawed.
 2. If all the facts were presented, we might find that we are not that "good."
 3. Our goodness cannot fix our relationship with a holy God—goodness and holiness are very different.

II. Sin Is Not Sin Argument

- A. When our "good person" negotiations fail, we argue with God about what is and is not sin.
- B. I Corinthians 6:9-11 lists several sins. This list is not exclusive but representative of sins.
- C. We often hear people say, "I don't think that is a sin," or "I don't feel like that is a sin."
- D. The problem is that our reasoning skills (thinking) and our emotions (feelings) have been infected by sin. We cannot depend entirely on our "feelings" or our "reason" to discern what is and is not sin.
- E. Are we really in a position to argue with God?

III. God is Love Argument

- A. When the "sin is not sin" argument fails, we may try the "God is Love" argument.
- B. "God loves us and would not send us to hell." This argument ultimately leads to you being able to do anything, live any way, without any fear of punishment. Why? Because God is love.
- C. While God's love is His primary characteristic, it is not His only characteristic.
- D. God's love and God's justice are equal
- E. The Lamb of God represents love. The Lion of Judah represents justice—Jesus is both!

Our negotiations fail because we are not the mediator. All communication ceases, and our arguments are exposed as invalid. We cannot negotiate for ourselves. God cannot move from His position, and we will not move from ours.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time." (I Tim. 2:5-6)

IV. Jesus is the ONLY Mediator

- A. No priest, saint, or other person, regardless of how good, can mediate on our behalf.
- B. Jesus is indeed the ONLY mediator between us and God.

- E. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
(John 14:6)

V. Jesus is Uniquely Qualified to be the Mediator

- A. Jesus is fully human and fully God.
- B. Jesus fell into a deep sleep on the boat because he was tired. He was tired because he was human. Jesus woke up and calmed the storm. The winds obeyed him because he is God. (Matt. 8:23-27)
- D. Jesus got hungry because he was human. Jesus performed a miracle by feeding five-thousand with two fish and five loaves of bread because he was God. (Mark 11:12; Matt. 14:19)
- E. Jesus died on the cross because he was human. Jesus raised himself from the dead because he is God.
- F. As a human, Jesus fully understands your position. He was tempted in every way you have been tempted and bore the full weight of that temptations without sinning. (Heb. 4:15)
- G. As God, Jesus fully understands holiness. (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15)
- H. He is the ONLY one who can rightly mediate between humans and God!

Conclusion:

Jesus alone died to take the sins of the world and give us his righteousness. We must accept the work he has done on our behalf by believing that Jesus died for our sins, confessing him as risen Lord, and repenting of our sins. The main reason negotiations fail in the corporate world is because someone walks away from a good deal. Do not walk away.

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**THE LORD'S VISION
Amos 9:1-15**

Introduction:

Israel had a skewed picture of God, but sometimes we do too. Instead of seeing God in His fullness, we only pick and choose the things we would like to focus on, such as His love, mercy, and grace. Do we truly see God as He is, or do we make Him into the God we want to see?

In this passage, God reveals Himself to Amos for who He truly is. The attributes God revealed to Amos have not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

I. The Lord Reveals Himself

- A. The Lord is a seeking God. God told Israel through Amos that there is no place they can hide, run, or escape the coming judgment (1b-3a).
- B. God is sovereign over the circumstances of life. Nothing ever has or will happen that has not passed through the hands of God (3b-8).
- C. It wasn't the grain that had to pass through the sieve, it was Israel. They would be sorted and sifted by God through affliction (9-10).
- D. God knew that Israel would fall short on their end of the bargain. He called them out anyway and extended grace. He saved and restored Israel, despite their shortcomings (11-15).

II. How Does God View You?

- A. If you forsake God and fail to acknowledge Him as the one God, you will endure his judgment (8-10).
- B. If you fear and respect God as the great creator and worship him fully, His loving mercy and restoration will be extended to you (11-15).

Conclusion:

None of us want to face judgment like Israel. So, how do we start to see God as He has revealed Himself? We have to corporately humble ourselves before God, corporately confess our sins to God, and corporately repent before God.

THAT'S DISGUSTING
Malachi 1:6-14

Introduction:

Imagine yourself at your favorite coffee shop on a brisk autumn day. The barista knows your order by heart and has your medium black coffee prepared almost before you can utter the request. You sit down at a table outside to read the paper, and quickly become absorbed in the latest news from your quaint town. Thirty minutes later, you realize you have forgotten about your coffee. You reach for it and, hoping it is still piping hot, take a sip. You discover that it is not hot and not cold, but rather somewhere in the middle. Disgusted, you throw away your disappointing cup of coffee.

This stage of being neither hot nor cold is far from desirable, and it is a spiritual attitude described in Revelation 3:16 in reference to the church in Laodicea, "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." Malachi writes to the Jewish people of Jerusalem after the Babylonian-exile who are partaking in an apathetic form of worship. He tells them that they must see that God is worthy to be fervently sought after. How is it that you are seeking after the God who first sought after you? Are you merely going through the motions, hoping to please God with a heart that is not completely given over to him?

I. God is Worthy of Honor (Mal. 1:6)

- A. The very name or notion of God should elicit reverence, fear, honor, and loyalty. The Israelite priests no longer experienced those reactions.
- B. God is the creator of the universe; he is the one who led Israel through its most challenging times; he is the one who sent his son to be the Savior of his people; and he is a God who desires to have a relationship with you. Does that make you marvel at your amazing God?

II. God is Worthy of Worship (Mal. 1:7-12)

- A. It is here that self-evaluation must take place. The priests partook in an apathetic, or perhaps half-hearted, form of worship. The words "apathetic" and "worship" are oxymorons. Apathetic worship (a type of worship that merely goes through the motions and is unconcerned with bringing God glory) is not worship at all.

- B. Real worship happens at the very core of who we are, and is not merely an action we perform. The priests were going through the motions and taking short-cuts in their "worship." They did so because their efforts were a direct reflection of the spiritual condition of their hearts.
- C. God did not send his best and save you from your worst to receive whatever is convenient for you. While the priests were reluctant to bring forth worthy sacrifices, God was not. He sent Christ, while we were yet sinners, to die for us.

III. God is Worthy of the Joy of our Ministry (Mal. 1:13-14)

- A. If you are a Christian, alive in the Spirit through the gospel of Jesus, then you must have an active role in ministry. This ministry is not a burden. When ministry becomes a burden, there are a few questions we must ask: Am I going through religious motions and causing myself to feel burdened? Is there something in my life that is causing me to feel separated from God? Is there someone around me who is a poor influence on my life?
- B. When you find yourself becoming complacent or apathetic in your worship and work in ministry, read Psalm 100.
- C. Let the zeal of your heart be overcome by your expressions and actions of love for the people you are called to serve.

Conclusion:

Can you relate to the Israelite priests? Are you offering up an apathetic form of worship? God is worthy of honor, worship, and the joy of our ministry. You must turn to him and strengthen your relationship with him. We must take Philippians 1:27 to heart and be encouraged to live a life that is worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ — a life that never lacks fervency, zeal, and tenacity.

ON A BOAT TO TARSHISH**Jonah 1:1-16****Introduction:**

It seems, at times, that the miraculous story of Jonah is remembered predominately for its association with the great fish. Although the fish is not the intended focus of the story, it offers an example of how certain elements of events become promoted to a level far beyond what they were intended. One of the most convicting quotes regarding the account of Jonah is from Sir George Adam Smith: "And this is the tragedy of the Book of Jonah, that a Book which is made the means of one of the most sublime revelations of truth in the Old Testament should be known to most only for its connection with a whale." It is my challenge to you to allow the account of Jonah to convict you from the various elements of truth apparent in the text.

I. God's Will Does Not Always Coincide with Our Desires (Jonah 1:1-3)

- A. Jonah does not want to go to Nineveh, and, given the state of Nineveh during this period, you would think Jonah to be a prudent man. However, God called Jonah to Nineveh, and he has no desire to go.
- B. It is evident in scripture that the desires of the self are contrary to the desires of the Spirit within us. Galatians 5 speaks of the enmity between the two.
- C. Where is God calling you to serve him? Are you obeying God's command?

II. Disobeying God Affects You and Those Around You (Jonah 1:4-7)

- A. Jonah's disobedience put others in imminent danger.
- B. The Lord's glory was shown, even when Jonah was disobedient. The mariners were able to see God's glory and power through Jonah's disobedience.
- C. The way in which you respond to how God calls you not only affects your life, but also those around you. Your sin, though it primarily affects you, also has lingering effects on the lives of those closely surrounding you.

III. Follow God's Call (Jonah 1:8-16)

- A. If you think that you have gone too far away from God's plan for your life to ever turn back and follow that plan, you are mistaken.
- B. Jonah boards a ship to head in the opposite direction, but still finds God's providence is with him. Verse nine is essential. Here Jonah realizes that the effects of his sin in his decision not to follow God's plan are upon him and those with him. Jonah's obedience begins with recognizing and confessing his identity in his God.

Conclusion:

Maybe you are running from and resisting God's call to salvation through his son Jesus Christ. If this is the case, take a moment to consider how this affects your life and those around you. Realizing that God's will does not always align with our own desires is foundational. The quicker we realize this truth, the greater our ability to respond appropriately to God's call. We must also see that sin and disobedience, though they do affect us directly, also affect those around us. Finally, we must recognize who is calling us. God himself is drawing us near, and with that knowledge, we can stand in his power and fulfill the calling he has placed upon our lives.

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HELPING TOGETHER BY PRAYER
I Timothy 2: 1-4

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul, who ministered for Christ as a missionary, made much of prayer. In I Tim. 2:1-4, he called upon Timothy to engage in constant prayer. He identifies four types of praying:

- Supplications are directed to God for Him “to supply” a desire or want, (Rom 8:26)
- Prayers indicate a general term for asking of those petitions for which a believer desires or is plainly permitted according to Scriptures (Matt. 6:11)
- Intercessions denote the petitioning of God on behalf of others in like manner as one would petition a king. (Rom. 10: 1, James 5:16)
- Giving of thanks in prayer indicates a grateful heart to God for His bountiful blessings and grace. Thanksgiving should be conjunctive with asking.

I. A Christian’s approach to God in prayer should be with boldness by the blood of Jesus ... with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:19-22).

- A. A Christian employs a positional endowment received at salvation. This is delegated power of authority. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 that He had received all power in Heaven and earth. He, therefore, gave the commission to go, disciple, baptize and teach in that same power.
- B. The authority is not in man’s name but in the name of the Lord Jesus. Although a law enforcement officer cannot physically stop a large vehicle, he can bring one to a full halt by an uplifted, stretched out hand by the authority delegated to him by the law. So, in like manner, can the believer do nothing by himself, but through the delegated authority from Christ, he can deter the forces of Satan.

II. Paul was thankful for the prayers of the Corinthians concerning his deliverance. He expressed thanks for their “helping together by prayer for us.”

- A. Intercessory prayer on Paul’s behalf was a major factor in God’s accomplishing His work through this dedicated missionary.
- B. Paul goes on to commend Epaphras’ prayer life with:
 1. Steadfastness — “always”
 2. Struggle — “laboring fervently”
 3. Subjection — “that ye might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”
 4. Seriousness — “great zeal”

Conclusion:

As an apostle, missionary, and minister of Christ, Paul admonished believers to pray for him. In the same way believers today can pray for those in the Gospel ministry. In Rom. 15:30, Paul earnestly entreats believers for the prayers on his behalf, noting it is *for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake.*”

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PLAYING WITH PASSIVITY**Malachi 1:6-14****Introduction:**

The Lord is a magnificent God. His ways are deep and unsearchable. He is that great, yet he is extremely loving and wonderful to his people. He is worthy of praise for his holiness and grace.

How does God feel when we are lax with the things of God? What does God do? We should not play with passivity. In the book of Malachi, the Israelites were toying with apathy in their offerings and worship. Why should hymns of praise drive our hearts to worship rather than causing us to roll our eyes? This passage gives fair warning to the apathetic people of God.

I. God Is Displeased with Indifferent “Worship” (Mal. 1:6-10)

- A. The people of Israel have brought offerings of worship to God lackadaisically. They have become indifferent and apathetic about being obedient to him by being half obedient. Israel makes sacrifices—just not as God has instructed them. The sacrifices they bring are not those worthy of sacrifice to the most holy God. We should not be apathetic toward the things of God. He is worthy of all worship, so we should passionately worship a gracious God.
- B. He instructs Israel to pray that God would show favor to them despite their disobedience.
 - 1. Have we prayed to rid our hearts of apathy?
 - 2. Have we prayed to be devoted to what glorifies the Lord? It seems that God would rather you not be a worshiper than to be a false, lukewarm worshiper (Rev. 3:16).

II. God’s People Disdain His Name (Mal. 1:11-13)

- A. In this passage, the Lord states that indifference to worshipping him is profaning his name. If you are not passionately loving God but acting as though you are, you are living an insult to God.
- B. Apathy is scorning the altar of God. That is unacceptable in his sight. God’s name is to be worshiped with the entirety of your life. He is worthy of that.

III. God Brings Damnation on Those Who Do Not Fear Him (Mal. 1:14).

- A. God promises to curse or punish those who, in their greed, do not worship Him as He has instructed them to—an action likened to profaning his name.
- B. Holding back your life from God is a dangerous game to play. Do not wait to devote yourself to Him. Not only is he worthy, but he is gracious to those who repent.

Conclusion:

Fear God. Not only show him respect, but fear him knowing that he holds life and death in his hands and that he sustains all things seen and unseen. He is a great God who is not only high and lifted up, He is also near and loving. Worship and trust in him, and you will be His.

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THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS 1 Corinthians 1:18

Introduction:

Without the cross, the resurrection has little meaning. In 2 Kings, both Elijah and Elisha were involved in raising a boy from the dead. Jesus raised a girl from the dead; he raised a widow's son from the dead; and he raised Lazarus from the dead. All these were raised from the dead. But all these would once again face death.

The Lord Jesus has been raised from the dead, but the difference is the cross. It was not just any cross. Men were crucified all the time. Men were frequently put to death by crucifixion, but only one man would die for the sins of the world. His name is Jesus, and this is the message of His cross.

I. The Fury of the Cross

Death on the cross was vicious and vile.

II. The Foolishness of the Cross

- A. The reactions of the people walking by varied:
 - 1. Some thought "What a waste!"
 - 2. Some mocked and others murmured.
- B. Things have not changed in 2,000 years
 - 1. Men still stumble over the cross
 - 2. Men still cannot accept that God redeems through the blood of the crucified Savior.
- C. Why does mankind find the cross to be foolish?
 - 1. Because of his nature (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - 2. Because they have been blinded (2 Cor. 4:3-4)
 - 3. Because many are deceived (2 Th. 2:10)
 - a) Deceived that they have plenty of time
 - b) Deceived that they are good enough
 - c) Deceived that God really doesn't punish sin and that hell does not exist.

III. The Forgiveness Found on the Cross (Cor. 1:18)

- A. The four realities of your salvation:
 - 1. We "were saved." (Rom. 8:24)
 - 2. "You have been saved." (Eph. 2:5)
 - 3. You "are being saved." (1 Cor. 15:2)
 - 4. You "shall be saved." (Rom. 10:9)
- B. If you are saved today, it is because you received what Jesus offered.
 - 1. He offered you life where death reigned
 - a) Death entered through Adam's sin.
 - b) Adam sinned and died immediately in his spirit.
 - c) He died progressively in his soul, and he died ultimately in his body.
 - d) You were dead in your spirit, were dying progressively in your soul, and you will die ultimately in your body.
 - 2. He offered to remove the penalty for sin.
 - 3. Christ Jesus also offered you full forgiveness.
- C. How do you receive the forgiveness found on the cross?
 - 1. With right theology—recognize you are a sinner
 - 2. With right thinking—recognized you need a Savior
 - 3. With right faith—believe the Savior will forgive you

Conclusion:

We are not called to preach about history, society, or with sophistry, but we are called to preach the cross of Christ.

Harry Ironside was a great preacher of the last century. While traveling with some friends on a ferry, they were singing choruses. A man heard them and started to criticize. He said, "Who are you people? What are you doing?" And, Harry Ironside said, "Well, we're just some Christians; we're having a good time; and we're just praising our Lord." And, the man said, "You're a bunch of fools." Ironside said, "You're right; we are." He said, "We're fools for Christ's sake. Whose fool are you?"

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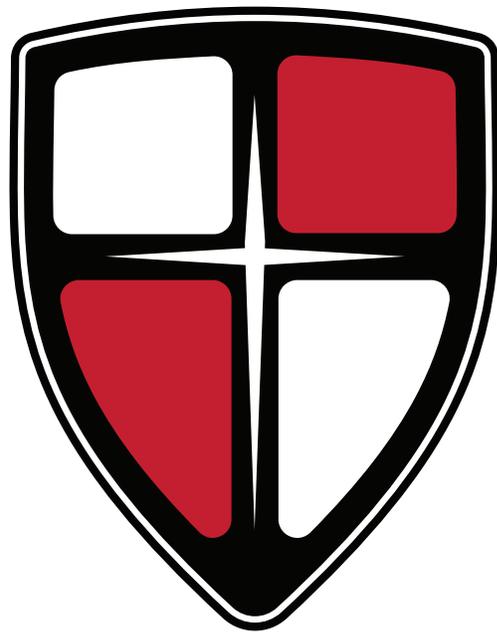
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