

NCC Roots Class...Session #1---Beatitudes and Blessings 9/4/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we begin an 8-week journey together that will focus specifically on the teachings of Jesus on a mount/high place next to the Sea of Galilee.
- People have called it “The Sermon on the Mount” because the Gospel of Matthew specifically says that Jesus went up on the mountain, sat down and began to teach the people.
- I’ve titled this 8-part series “**What Did You Say?**” because of this verse also from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but **my words will never disappear.**

- If that is true, and I’m convinced it is...then I want to know... “**What did you say?**”
- Jesus’ sermon on the mount is found in its most detail in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke also carries some portions of it in his text...we will primarily take this journey together through Matthew’s Gospel.
- We begin today; part one, with **the beatitudes**...which means...**a state of utmost bliss.**
- Blessings...what are they and do you want them...from Jesus?
- Jesus begins his sermon on the mount with an **eight step process to experiencing the utmost bliss.**
- Before I read them to you today and ask the question “**Jesus...What Did You Say?**”...I ask each of you this question... “Would you desire the blessing of God...utmost bliss”?

Matthew 5:1-12 (NLT)

¹ One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them. ³ “**God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.** ⁴ **God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.** ⁵ **God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.** ⁶ **God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.** ⁷ **God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.** ⁸ **God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.** ⁹ **God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.** ¹⁰ **God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.** ¹¹ “**God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers.** ¹² **Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.**

- 8 Steps to utmost bliss and blessings...what did you say...we will only cover 6 today.

Step #1) Poor-Spiritual Poverty

Matthew 5:3 (NLT)

³ “**God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.**

- NIV and NASB use the phrase “poor in spirit” and NLT uses “poor and realizes their need for him”.

- They both say the same thing...utmost bliss comes by taking the first step of these 8 steps of recognizing my own spiritual poverty.
- When did you seek Jesus...when your spirit was rich or when your spirit was broken?

Revelation 3:17 (NLT) Jesus to the Church at Laodemia

¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

- Why do people cry when they come to the altar to receive Christ?
- Mortality and spiritual poverty...it's humbling to recognize our insufficiency, but you can't find this utmost bliss without acknowledging your spiritual poverty (I am poor)...Jesus describes it as the first step.
- First step to what....you won't start up the steps toward utmost bliss until you realize that you can't provide it for yourself and then you "realize your need of him-Jesus".
- I'm broke without Jesus...I am poor, even if I'm rich because I can't hold onto anything because I am mortal.
- But, what is the reward of acknowledging my spiritual poverty...the Kingdom of Heaven.
- What do you think follows this acknowledgment of my poverty...let's ask Jesus...What did you say?

Step #2) Mourning and Penitence

Matthew 5:4 (NLT)

⁴ God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- How could it be good to mourn?
- Jesus describes this as the second step to utmost bliss and blessings...what did you say?
- Would you seek comfort without mourning...would you seek a comforter without the recognition of your grief?
- I ask the same question again...why are people crying when they come to Christ?
- It's good to be sad and mourn if sadness and mourning leads to the utmost bliss.
- Have you ever wondered why Jesus refers to the coming Holy Spirit as the "Comforter"?
- When Jesus walked into his home town synagogue in Nazareth he opened the scroll to a 700 year old writing from the prophet Isaiah and read it out-loud to the people assembled there that day.
- This is that prophecy.

Isaiah 61:2-3 (NLT)

² He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. ³ To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory.

- What did you say...a crown of beauty will be exchanged for ashes.
- What did you say...a joyous blessing instead of mourning.
- What did you say...festive praise instead of despair.

- What did you say...tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come.
- But mourning what...my sin and my uncleanness in the presence of this coming holiness.
- The old word is **penitence**...a feeling of deep sadness because you have done something wrong.
- These first two steps are not easy....humility and mourning (penitence)...they are a kin to confession and repentance and these two steps are never easy.
- But where do these steps lead...the utmost bliss...the Kingdom of Heaven.

Step #3) Meekness and Humility

Matthew 5:5 (NLT)

⁵ God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

- NASB uses the word “gentle” and NIV uses the word “meek”.
- What did you say...the gentle and meek will inherit the whole earth.
- That's not how it works is it...the strong get the spoils...right?
- What did you say?

Matthew 23:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ The greatest among you must be a servant.

¹² But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- This is the third step and this step gets you a very large inheritance...the whole earth.
- What did you say?
- Eugene Peterson (the Message) calls this transaction of Jesus...the great reversal.
- It's when the first (the strong) will trade places with the last (the meek and gentle).
- But what does he mean about the whole earth inheritance thing?

2 Timothy 2:10-12 (NLT)

¹⁰ So I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen. ¹¹ This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him.

¹² If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.

- What did you say?

Revelation 20:6 (NLT)

⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and **will reign with him a thousand years.**

- What is the next step to utmost bliss...what did you say?

Step # 4) Spiritual Hunger and Thirst

Matthew 5:6 (NLT)

⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

- Not just being hungry and not just being thirsty, but being hungry and thirsty for something specific.
- What are you hungry and thirsty for...this will describe the set of steps that you are now walking and also describe what your life is seeking after?
- Right now, all of creation is moving toward its hunger and thirst...what are you hungry for?
- God blesses (offers the utmost bliss) for those who will hunger and thirst for justice/righteousness.
- Do you want to do what's right?
- Do you want to see our people, our nation do what is right...do you hunger for that?
- What did you say...do you mean there are things that are right and just?
- What did you say...does that mean there are things that are NOT right and unjust?
- That would mean that there is "right and wrong"...then who gets to decide that?
- What did you say...that would mean there is truth....then who gets to decide that?
- What did you say...

John 14:6 (NLT)

⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

- What did you say?

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

- So, who gets to decide truth and right and wrong?
- Is it possible to seek after Jesus without seeking after truth and justice?
- Blessings and utmost bliss/Kingdom of Heaven are at the top of these steps, but did you notice something else.

Matthew 5:6 (NLT)

⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

- Satisfaction is the blessing...they will see justice in the end.
- Why, because justice will come in the end.

Revelation 19:11 (NLT)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war.

- Where will you be on that day when He that is faithful and true comes to judge fairly and wage a righteous war?
- What did you say?

Revelation 19:11-16 (NLT)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. ¹² His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his

head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself.

¹³ He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. ¹⁴ **The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses.**

¹⁵ From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress.

¹⁶ On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

- Does that make you hungry...thirsty?
- What did you say?

Step #5 Mercy

- We're moving up the steps toward utmost bliss/Kingdom of Heaven are you ready for this one?
- What did you say?

Matthew 5:7 (NLT)

⁷ God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- If you're not careful you can trip on these steps 4 and 5.
- If you're not careful your hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness will leave you without mercy...watch out for step 5 as you seek out the utmost bliss.
- I've never met anyone who didn't like receiving mercy, but I have found many who were short on giving it out.
- What did you say...you want mercy...you must give mercy.
- What is mercy anyway...it is "loving kindness" and if you want it, you must be willing to give it.
- Yes, we seek justice and righteousness, but we also seek loving kindness...mercy.
- Do you want it...step 5 that leads to utmost bliss.

James 2:13 (NLT)

¹³ There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

- What did you say?

Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT)

²¹ Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" [like many people, Peter was hung up on that 5th step]²² "No, not seven times," Jesus

replied, "but seventy times seven!" ²³ "Therefore, **the Kingdom of Heaven** can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him.

²⁴ In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.

²⁵ He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. ²⁶ "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.'" ²⁷ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. ²⁸ "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I

will pay it,' he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. ³¹ "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ **Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?**

³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵ "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

- What did you say...this is about your heart...being changed on the inside.
- Anybody here stuck on steps 4 & 5...you hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness but you are have no loving kindness toward others?
- You want justice, but you lack forgiveness...this step is going to trip you up!
- What is the reward of giving mercy...you get mercy!
- What did you say?

Step #6 Pure in Heart

- Has anyone noticed how these steps are progressive?
- You start with the acknowledgement of your own spiritual poverty...step one (like confession).
- That leads to mourning and penitence of your sinfulness which brings repentance...step two.
- That creates a new view of self which is like your Master Jesus gentleness and meekness...step three.
- Becoming like Jesus brings the righteousness and justice of Jesus into your life. You're hungry for these because you're hungry for Him....step four.
- This is when you see the loving kindness and mercy of God as a free gift that has been given to you and now you are compelled to give it to others...step 5.
- What did you say...step 6...I hope you're ready for this one because it's big!

Matthew 5:8 (NLT)

⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for **they will see God.**

- Compare this reward on step 6 to the reward on the other steps...you can't can you?
- You will see God...go ahead and try to top that one.
- Let's face it...you can't just jump up to step 6...it is progressive.
- The human heart is NOT pure, but deceitfully wicked so we need a heart transplant, a change in heart to ever see God.

Psalm 24:1-6 (NLT)

¹ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

² For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.

³ **Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?**

⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

⁵ They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.

⁶ Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.

- The great King David fell victim to an impure heart and committed adultery and murder.
- David wanted restoration and **David wanted to see God** and David wrote Psalm 51 as his prayer to God.
- What did you say?

Psalm 51:7-12 (NLT)

⁷ Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me— now let me rejoice.

⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart,** O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

¹¹ **Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.**

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

- Would you pray that...have you prayed that...create in me a clean heart, O God?
- The essence of being born again is the spiritual purification of my own heart by the mercy of God given through the sacrificial blood of Christ, His Son.
- Then and only then will any of us....see God.

Closing

- We're going to stop there on the 6th step and pick up with 7 and 8 next week.
 - I close with two questions...
 - Who doesn't want the utmost bliss/blessings of God...the Kingdom of Heaven?
 - Is any of this out of your reach...steps that you cannot tread?
 - This is why it's called the Good News...
1. You can see God.
 2. You can receive the mercy of God.
 3. You can be satisfied with justice and righteousness.
 4. You can inherit the whole earth.
 5. You can be comforted by the Comforter.
 6. You can make the Kingdom of Heaven "yours".
- Sounds like utmost bliss to me, but that's because I believe it.
 - I'm a believer and that is the very reason that a person will start up these steps.
 - What did You Say?

NCC Roots Class...Session #2---War and Opposition 9/11/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today is part two of our 8-week journey together that will focus specifically on the teachings of Jesus on a mount/high place next to the Sea of Galilee.
- People have called it “The Sermon on the Mount” because the Gospel of Matthew specifically says that Jesus went up on the mountain, sat down and began to teach the people.
- I’ve titled this series “What Did You Say?” because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

- If that is true, and I’m convinced it is...then I want to know... “What did you say?”

Matthew 13:44 (NLT)

⁴⁴ “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

- Treasure, a once hidden treasure has been revealed to man...the Kingdom of Heaven.
- I told you last week that this text is labeled “**the beatitudes**”...which means...**a state of utmost bliss.**
- Blessings...what are they and do you want them...from Jesus?
- Jesus begins his sermon on the mount with an eight step process to experiencing the utmost bliss.
- Last week I covered the first 6 steps that enter into the utmost bliss (the heart of man that seeks a relationship with God)
- Here’s the first six as we continue today...
 1. Poor in heart...poor in spirit... is when you realize you own spiritual poverty.
 2. Mourning and Penitence...when you grieve the sin that causes your poverty.
 3. Meekness and humility...This is when you begin to look and act like Jesus.
 4. Spiritual hunger and thirst (all creation moves toward its hunger and thirsty) you hunger and thirst for justice/righteousness because that is who Jesus is.
 5. Mercy (give it and you’ll get it)...how are you doing with that part?
 6. Pure in Heart...you will see God...what did you think was at the top of the steps.

Matthew 5:1-8 (NLT)

¹ One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him,

² and he began to teach them.

³ “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

⁴ God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

⁷ God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

- 8 Steps to utmost bliss and blessings, the kingdom of heaven...what did you say?
- I've covered 6...now the last two...are you ready?

#7) Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9 (NLT)

⁹ God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

- The seventh step on the way to utmost bliss acknowledges something that most people don't want to admit...there is a war going on.
- What did you say...there is a war and if you work for peace in this war you will be called the children of God.
- So...how do we work for peace in this war...that's the big question (4 questions).
 1. Do I work for peace by pretending that the war isn't real?
 2. Do I work for peace by surrendering to the enemy?
 3. Do I work for peace by moving away from the battle lines...stay out of the way?
 4. Who are we fighting anyway...What did you say?

Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)

¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

- Let's start by clarifying who the **peacemakers** are NOT fighting against...flesh and blood.
- Your enemy is not that guy down the street or family member that seems to be destroying your peace.
- Your enemy is not flesh and blood and flesh and blood is the description of mankind/humans.
- Then who are we fighting...who is this war against...what did you say?
 1. Evil rulers and authorities in the unseen world.
 2. Mighty powers in the dark world.
 3. Evil spirits in the heavenly places.
- So, how do you **make peace** with that...we don't!
- So, how do you **fight against** that...you can't!
- What did you say...next verse

Ephesians 6:13-17 (NLT)

¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness.

¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- Becoming a peacemaker has nothing to do with denying the reality of our spiritual battle.
- Becoming a peacemaker has nothing to do with tolerating the evil of our real enemy.

- Becoming a peacemaker is the seventh step on the way to utmost bliss and the first six steps dealt with the heart of man as it seeks a relationship with God.
- Now the seventh and eighth steps will announce the opposition to that relationship with God...**the war**.
- This war is between God and Satan and no man can stand against Satan by himself...you will lose.
- Our victory in this war is not based on making peace with Satan, but making **peace with God and the children of God**...this is the essence of the first six steps into the utmost bliss of God's presence...it's called victory...it's called the Kingdom of Heaven.
- This battle is already won...it was won when the Prince of Peace went to the cross and defeated our enemy and the enemy of God.
- It was the love of God, sending His only Son to the cross of Calvary that defeated Satan....how does that affect me now/today...you just put on Christ...He is the armor.
- It was the love of God that made available to us this "whole armor of God" that will allow us to take our stand in this battle.
- Look at what you are putting on in this battle against the enemy...I thought we were talking about peace?
- How do you make peace in the midst of war?

Ephesians 1:19-23 (NLT)

¹⁹ I also pray that you will understand **the incredible greatness of God's power** for us who believe him. This is the same **mighty power** ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now **he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.**

²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him **head over all things** for the benefit of the church. ²³ And **the church is his body**; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere **with himself**.

- Blessed are the Peacemakers (those who work for peace) because they wear the armor of Christ and Victory is secure.
- There will be no peace without the victory of Christ.
- You can't negotiate peace with Satan...you claim it through the blood of Christ.
- You can't make nice and appease Satan...you defeat Him by the power of the Prince of Peace.
- Satan is an enemy...There will be no peace until this enemy is finally defeated.
- Satan is the source of death...murder...He kills, steals and destroys...how will there be peace as long as his kingdom exists?
- What did you say?

John 8:44 (NLT)

⁴⁴ For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- What did you say?

- The Word of God tells us that Satan is the prince of this world...at least for now.
- Near the end there will be a man of lawlessness, working under the power of Satan...he will influence the whole world for evil, not peace.
- But one day, Jesus will come and notice what will happen when He arrives (do you think there will be peace before this day) Peacemakers yes, but peace no!

2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 (NLT)

¹ Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him.

² Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. ³ Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and **the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction.**

⁴ He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

⁵ Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?

⁶ And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.

⁷ For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. ⁸ Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, **but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.**

⁹ This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles.

¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

- The Prince of Peace...make peace with Him (Romans-How to be made right with God).
- The Prince of Peace...He will cause you to make peace with your brothers and sisters (mercy).
- Peacemakers...They will be called the children of God...why...how (by making peace with God)?
- They **defeated** death by following the One who **defeated** death and then turned around and said "Follow ME".
- To defeat death is to defeat Satan!

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (NLT)

²⁴ After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. ²⁵ For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. ²⁶ **And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

Step #8) Blessed are the Persecuted

- Those first 7 steps were about the heart of man toward God, but now there is war!
- You would never understand this last step until you understood the first seven.
- The steps that move man into the utmost bliss/kingdom are not easy and there will be opposition.

Matthew 5:10-12 (NLT)

¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

- Why is there persecution...because there is a war!
- The Kingdom of Heaven is at war with the kingdom of darkness.
- What did you say...look at how Jesus describes this kingdom of darkness as the soldiers come to arrest him in the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:52-53 (NLT)

⁵² Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests, the captains of the Temple guard, and the elders who had come for him. “Am I some dangerous revolutionary,” he asked, “that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? ⁵³ Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple? I was there every day. **But this is your moment, the time when the power of darkness reigns.**”

- Jesus was persecuted for doing right...because the Kingdom of Heaven is at war with the kingdom of darkness.
- What happens to darkness when light comes (it must flee)?
- Turn on a light and what happens...darkness departs.
- If Jesus is the light of the world, then the light is a person...right!
- If Jesus is the light and the light is a person...isn’t it reasonable to assume that darkness is also a person?
- If Jesus is the Truth, then what about a person without truth?

John 8:44 (NLT)

⁴⁴ For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because **there is no truth in him**. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- How do you think you will fight an enemy that has no light and no truth?
- Maybe now you understand the reason for this war and the persecution and the opposition to the light.

John 12:44-50 (NLT)

⁴⁴ Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. ⁴⁵ For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. ⁴⁷ I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. ⁴⁸ But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by **the truth** I have spoken.

⁴⁹ I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”

- Persecution of believers is nothing more than the darkness trying to keep the light from causing its departure.

- Persecution of believers is nothing more than lies trying to stop the proclamation of truth.
- What did you think the darkness was going to do when you shined the light (persecution and opposition is natural response from darkness in this war.
- What did you say?

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

- What did you say?

Matthew 5:10-12 (NLT)

¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹ “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers.

¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

- What’s at stake anyway...in this war...what’s at stake?
- The Kingdom of Heaven...the ultimate treasure.
- Do you think it will be light there...what did you say?

1 John 1:5-7 (NLT)

⁵ This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is **light**, and there is **no darkness** in him at all.

⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in **spiritual darkness**; we are not practicing **the truth**.

⁷ But if we are living in **the light**, as God is in **the light**, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Closing

- The Sermon on the Mount...what did you say?
- The Beatitudes...8 steps into the utmost bliss...victory in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 1. Poor in heart...poor in spirit... is when you realize you own spiritual poverty.
 2. Mourning and Penitence...when you grieve the sin that causes your poverty.
 3. Meekness and humility...This is when you begin to look and act like Jesus.
 4. Spiritual hunger and thirst (all creation moves toward its hunger and thirsty) you hunger and thirst for justice/righteousness because that is who Jesus is.
 5. Mercy...first you should receive it from God, through faith and then give it away to others.
 6. Pure in Heart...you will see God...what did you think was at the top of these 8 steps.
 7. Peacemakers...they will be called the children of God
 8. Persecuted...light bearers...the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs...think about that statement.

- It's at the top of the 8 steps...the kingdom of Heaven is there.
- Light is there...God is there...eternal life is there...utmost bliss is there.
- Immediately following these 8 steps of blessings is this proclamation to the church.
- Before I read this "What did you say" truth from Jesus...I must say that the "you" is "you" if you have walked up these 8 steps into the utmost bliss.

Matthew 5:13-16 (NLT)

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

- What did you say...Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!
- Light, salt, good deeds...what did you think the utmost bliss would look like?
- No more darkness...why...this is the Kingdom of Heaven.
- What did you say?

Revelation 21:22-27 (NLT)

²² I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light.

²⁴ The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory.

²⁵ Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is **no night there**.

²⁶ And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city.

²⁷ Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

#7) Blessed are the peacemakers, those who work for peace because they will be called the children of God.

#8) Blessed are those who are persecuted for doing right for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

- How are you going to deal with number 7 & 8?
- So...how do we work for peace in this war...that's the big question (4 questions).
- 1. Do I work for peace by pretending that the war isn't real?
- 2. Do I work for peace by surrendering to the enemy?
- 3. Do I work for peace by moving away from the battle lines...stay out of the way?
- 4. Who are we fighting anyway...What did you say?
- First, make peace with God...accept his mercy as He calls your name.
- Second, make peace with your brothers and sisters....we are not at war with them.
- Peace with God defeats death and if you defeat death...you have defeated the enemy.

NCC Roots Session #3---The Law and the Prophets 9/18/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we continue our 8-week journey together through Jesus' sermon on the mount.
- I've titled this series "What Did You Say?" because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but **my words will never disappear**.

- If that is true, and I'm convinced it is...then I want to know... "What did you say?"
- Jesus began his sermon with 8 Steps to the Kingdom of Heaven and then proclaimed that the church would be the light and salt of the world (turn on the light and tell the truth).
- Today we begin with verse 17 and ask Jesus again...What did you say?
- His topic...**God's Law...and the Kingdom of Heaven...**the ultimate treasure!

Matthew 5:17-20 (NLT)

¹⁷ "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the **Kingdom of Heaven**. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the **Kingdom of Heaven**. ²⁰ "But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the **Kingdom of Heaven**!"

- Three times...Jesus talks about the treasure, the goal of life...the Kingdom of Heaven.
- In Jesus' time the Old Testament was often referred to as "The Law" or sometimes "The Law and the Prophets".
- The Jewish leaders struggled with Jesus because to them it seemed like Jesus was undoing the Law, changing the Law or adding to the Law...their way to be made right with God.
- The Jewish leaders felt it their task to protect the Law and thus they had a problem with Jesus.
- The word "testament" can also be translated into the word "covenant".
- Do you see why the Jewish leaders wanted to protect the "covenant" which was their very promise of God to be the children of God (the way to be made right with God)?
- So in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus addresses what we would call the "Old Testament" in this way.

Matthew 5:17-18 (NLT)

¹⁷ "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.

¹⁸ I tell you the truth, **until heaven and earth disappear**, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

- Notice specifically that Jesus is referring to the entire Old Testament writings by using the words "Law of Moses" and the "writings of the Prophets".
- So, we're talking about Genesis to Malachi here...right?

- Did Jesus come to **throw out** Genesis to Malachi or did Jesus come to **accomplish** Genesis to Malachi?
- Well...let's check out a couple of examples (from the first, middle and end).

Genesis 3:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and **her offspring. He will strike your head,** and you will strike his heel.”

- Did Jesus come to throw that out or to accomplish it?

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

- Did Jesus come to throw that out or to accomplish it?

Malachi 4:1-3 (NLT)

¹ The LORD of Heaven's Armies says, “The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace. On that day the arrogant and the wicked will be burned up like straw. They will be consumed—roots, branches, and all.

² “But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.

³ On the day when I act, you will tread upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet,” says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

- Did Jesus come to throw that out or to accomplish it?
- Here is the point...Everything in the Old Testament revealed the coming of the Messiah/Christ.
- Everything in the Old Testament is revealed and accomplished through the Messiah/Christ.
- In fact, you will never understand the New Testament/Covenant until you understand the Old.
- If you don't understand Genesis (the first book in O/T) you will never understand Matthew (first book in N/T).
- The reason for Matthew is explained in Genesis (the fall of man is the reason for the birth of Christ as Savior of the world).
- This is not about “if”, but “**when**”...everything will be accomplished...nothing will be left undone.
- Think about Jesus standing in front of these Jewish men who have spent their entire lives studying the Old Testament and saying this:

Matthew 5:18 (NLT)

¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

- He's not arguing with them about the authority and power of the Old Testament...He's agreeing with them about the power of the Old Testament.
- So what is the problem...they don't see Him as Messiah...the very purpose and fulfillment of the Old Testament...that's the problem!
- After verse 18 the conversation turns from agreement to accountability under the Words of the Old Testament (Word of God)...here it comes.

Matthew 5:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

- From their perspective...Here is this simple son of a carpenter calling out the Jewish elite and learned.
- Instead of throwing out the Old Testament, Jesus is warning them not to ignore even the least of the commandments in the Old Testament or teach others to ignore them.
- If you ignore the teaching of the Old Testament...there will be severe consequences.
- That makes me pause and think about the modern American Church, or at least the environment that I grew up in.
- We constantly called ourselves a "New Testament Church" and actually I have no problem with that at all.
- Until, that began to ignore the Old Testament...the Law and the Prophets.
- Ignoring The Law...because we are Gentiles and under grace.
- Ignoring The prophets... because they must have all been using figurative language.
- The word "ignore" is the basis for the word "ignorance" and thus much of the American church ignored the Old Testament and raised up church people who were ignorant.
- How is that for offensive...Jesus was offensive too!
- If a book on American History had 66 chapters and you only read the last 27 chapters would you really know American history (39 O/T and 27 N/T).
- That's how we got an entire generation of church people that all they got from the Book of Daniel was a lion's den and fiery furnace.
- That's how we got an entire generation of church people that all they know about King David is that he killed a giant with a sling shot.
- Now, once again I'm going to read Jesus words, but this time don't think about the Jewish scholars standing on that mount next to the Sea of Galilee, but think about us today.

Matthew 5:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

- Turn on the Light and tell the truth!
- Listen, I'm not going to tell you Bible Stories...I'm going to tell you about the reason for the Bible Story....the reason is Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior of the World.
- If you ignore or teach other to ignore the Old Testament you will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- I'm not totally sure what that means, but I know this...I don't want the least of Jesus...I want the most of Jesus.
- **But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven...**that's what I want...the most of Jesus.
- Now Jesus changes the direction again with verse 20...this time it's a warning.

Matthew 5:20 (NLT)

²⁰ “But **I warn you**—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, **you will never enter** the Kingdom of Heaven!”

- It is so easy to read this **warning** of Jesus and think He's talking to somebody else.
- Jesus is giving a **warning** about “righteousness” getting right with God.
- Jesus **warns** that the religious folks method of “getting right” with God isn't going to work.
- Why, because the very purpose of the Old Testament was standing right in front of them, and they didn't recognize Him.
- The very purpose of the Old Testament was standing right in front of them and they didn't take hold of Him.
- The ONLY way **to be made right with God/make peace with God** was right there and many of them didn't believe HIM.
- Jesus was warning them with the ultimate warning... “**You will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven**”.
- Not least, or less, or more, but NONE/NEVER/EVER!
- All “**they**” had to do was believe Him...that's not so hard is it?
- All “**we**” have to do is believe Him...that's not so hard is it?
- The very reason for Jesus coming to the earth was to provide a way for man to be made right with God...make peace with God (peacemakers).
- Sin had made us un-right with God...so we needed a way to un-do our wrong and make us right.
- Jesus told the Apostle Paul about this way to be made right with God and Paul believed Him.
- Paul then wrote a letter to a church in Rome and told them and many of them believed Paul.

Romans 1:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ This Good News tells us **how God makes us right in his sight**. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “**It is through faith that a righteous person has life.**”

- Good News...Faith makes you righteous...makes you right and at peace with God.
- The good news isn't just the New Testament, but it's also the Old Testament.
- The good news tells us how our wrong can be made right and it is by faith...from start to finish.
- Believing, you can do that can't you...yes you can...but some of you won't.

- This has always been the dilemma of man...the freedom to choose...choose what...what to believe.
- I'm going to read these few verses of Jesus regarding the Law and the Prophets as I ask out-loud...WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Matthew 5:17-20 (NLT)

¹⁷ “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.

¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ “**But I warn you**—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, **you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!**

- The warning...you won’t be able to say you didn’t know.
- The warning...your righteousness must be better than the O/T teachers and Pharisee’s.
- The warning...Get right with God....make peace with God or you won’t make it.

Closing

- I close today with a reading from one of **the prophets**...the very Word of God through the prophet Ezekiel.
- God had called Ezekiel to **warn the people**...appointed him to be a watchman for the people of Israel.
- Jesus warned the people...preachers have been warning people for 2000 years now.

Ezekiel 33:7-9 (NLT)

⁷ “Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me.

⁸ If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to tell them to change their ways, then they will die in their sins, and I will hold you responsible for their deaths.

⁹ But if you warn them to repent and they don’t repent, they will die in their sins, but you will have saved yourself.

- If Jesus is the purpose of all the Old Testament, then Jesus is somewhere inside this calling of Ezekiel.
- Warning people to get right with God by turning from sin, through repentance.
- Surely everyone will heed the warning...right...by getting right with God?
- Surely everyone would listen to this warning when it comes to life and death, right?
- Is God mean...when He appoints Ezekiel, when Jesus stands on the Mount...when they give this warning...is it mean or hateful?
- I’m going to let the Word of God to Ezekiel answer that question for us today.

Ezekiel 33:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰ “Son of man, give the people of Israel this message: You are saying, ‘Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can we survive?’

¹¹ As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, **I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?**

- The Creator says TURN...you’re going the wrong way...should we listen or ignore?
- Ezekiel is announcing the coming judgment of God against those who will not turn to righteousness through repentance.
- Jesus is announcing the consequence of being excluded from the very Kingdom of Heaven is you don’t make things right with God.
- They are announcing the very same thing to different generations of people but it’s the same message I have today.
- Turn, through repentance and receive the righteousness of Christ and the forgiveness of your sins...this is the only way to be made right with God...forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ.

Matthew 5:20 (NLT)

²⁰ “But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

- Do you believe Him?

NCC Roots Class...Session #4---Anger, Adultery and Divorce 9/25/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we continue our 8-week long journey together that will focus specifically on the teachings of Jesus on a mount/high place next to the Sea of Galilee.
- People have called it “The Sermon on the Mount” because the Gospel of Matthew specifically says that Jesus went up on the mountain, sat down and began to teach the people.
- I’ve titled this series “What Did You Say?” because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but **my words will never disappear.**

- If that is true, and I’m convinced it is...then I want to know... “What did you say?”
- Today we begin with verse 21 and ask Jesus again...What did you say?

#1) Anger...

Matthew 5:21-26 (NLT)

²¹ “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’

²² But I say, **if you are even angry with someone**, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

²³ “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you,

²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵ “When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison.

²⁶ And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.

- Last week we talked at length about the law and how Jesus was the fulfillment of that law, not the abolisher.
- Jesus begins this topic of anger by reminding the people about the law...regarding murder.
- Remember, the Law of God is based on Truth and Jesus is Truth...so here comes the Truth from Jesus...What did you say?

Matthew 5:21 (NLT)

²¹ “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’

- So, where did these people and their ancestors hear about this law?
- Some 1500 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem...God had given these people the law and the 10 Commandments.

Exodus 20:13 (NLT)

¹³ “You must not murder.

- It’s not complicated or hard to understand...don’t do it...don’t do it or what?
- Judgment...judgment of God and judgment of governmental authorities established by God.
- Breaking the law makes you subject to judgment.
- God established this law against murder long before the time of Moses...go back to the flood and Noah.
- What did you say (God to Noah after the flood)?

Genesis 9:5-7 (NLT)

⁵ “And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die.

⁶ If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image. ⁷ Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

- Now, some 2000 years after Noah and some 1500 years after Moses and what did you say?

Matthew 5:22 (NLT)

²² **But I say,** if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

- What do you think causes murder...anger!
- How would you stop murder...stop the anger!
- Anger is like a set of steps that take you somewhere and at the top of those steps is murder.
- But Jesus comes and says that anger, and failing to acknowledge and deal with it is also a step in itself that leads to judgment.
- What did you say...anger leads to judgment!
- What did you say...calling someone an idiot in your anger leads to judgment!
- What did you say...cursing someone in your anger leads to judgment, even the fires of hell!
- So, here comes our time to think deeply...is anger in itself sinful?
- No, there is an anger that is righteous...God has this type of anger and of course God cannot sin against himself.
- God’s righteous anger rose against the children of Israel in the wilderness when they craved meat over manna...what did you say?

Psalms 78:29-31 (NLT)

²⁹ The people ate their fill. He gave them what they craved.

³⁰ But before they satisfied their craving, while the meat was yet in their mouths,

³¹ **the anger of God rose against them,** and he killed their strongest men. He struck down the finest of Israel’s young men.

- That’s the anger of God, but what about the righteous anger of man.
- I admit that sin makes me angry...idolatry makes me angry...is that anger sinful?

- No, we must hate evil...we must hate that which is wrong and stand for that which is right.

Romans 12:9 (NLT)

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. **Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.**

- Hating the wrong is a form of **righteous anger**, but that righteous anger does not take judgment into our hands, instead it leaves the judgment to God, even in the midst of our righteous anger.

Romans 12:17-19 (NLT)

¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. **Leave that to the righteous anger of God.** For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

- God has a righteous anger and He alone is the righteous judge...not us!
- You and I will also have a righteous anger, but that anger has a boundary.
- That anger is against the sin, not the person...we must be able to separate the two and leave the rest to God.
- So let's bring this all together and ask Jesus...What did you say about anger?
- This is real practical application for all of us in this room today...what did you say?

Matthew 5:21-22(NLT)

²¹ "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'

²² **But I say,** if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

- Let me ask each of you a question today...is there anyone that you need to be reconciled with?
- Is there anyone that you are angry with (you must separate the sin and the person).
- You against them or them against you ...you must try to reconcile.
- Don't bring judgment upon yourself or your family by refusing to listen to Jesus when He speaks.
- Jesus knows what real freedom is and real freedom is within your reach.
- Anger is the origin/root of murder...the steps that lead to judgment.
- Un-forgiveness is the root of most anger and **you can** forgive anyone you want to...just ask Jesus...He forgave you!
- Un-forgiveness and refusing to reconcile is **bondage** and Jesus came to set us free.
- Is this practical application or what...What did you say?

Matthew 5:23-26 (NLT)

²³ "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you,

²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵ “When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison.

²⁶ And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.

#2) Adultery

- Do you know what the very next verse addresses...adultery.
- Anyone see a connection between anger, un-forgiveness and adultery?
- Jesus did and I don’t think the order is an accident.
- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks of anger that leads to murder and then brings up adultery.
- Now, notice the order of the 10 Commandments (1500 years before the Sermon on the Mount).

Exodus 20:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ “You must not murder.

¹⁴ “You must not commit adultery.

- Here it comes...what did you say?

Matthew 5:27-30 (NLT)

²⁷ “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’

²⁸ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

²⁹ So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

³⁰ And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

- Did Jesus come to abolish the law or to accomplish the law?
- He even keeps them in sequential order in this teaching/sermon (murder then adultery).
- Jesus takes murder, which is punishable by death and reveals the root of anger that leads to judgment.
- Jesus then takes adultery, which leads to judgment of God and then reveals **the root of lust**.
- The root of murder is anger and the root of adultery is lust.
- **Murder and adultery** will ruin you and **anger and lust** will do the same.
- What did you say Jesus?
- We’ve got people sitting in this room right now that haven’t committed the physical act of adultery, but you sit at a computer screen and lust at a woman in pornography.
- What did you say Jesus...**You have already committed adultery with her in your heart of lust.**
- Come on Terry...it’s harmless if I don’t really do it!
- I’m not your judge, but as of today you know what the judge says about **adultery and lust**.

- Lust...a strong desire for something...I want it!
- It's not yours, it's out of bounds...I want it anyway...that's lust!
- Adultery is lust...it's not yours, it's out of bound...I want it anyway!
- What did you say...I don't think I can explain adultery and lust and their consequence better than this proverb...what did you say?

Proverbs 6:20-29 (NLT)

- ²⁰ My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your mother's instruction.
- ²¹ Keep their words always in your heart. Tie them around your neck.
- ²² When you walk, their counsel will lead you. When you sleep, they will protect you. When you wake up, they will advise you.
- ²³ For their command is a lamp and their instruction a light; their corrective discipline is the way to life.
- ²⁴ It will keep you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of a promiscuous woman.
- ²⁵ **Don't lust for her beauty.** Don't let her coy glances seduce you.
- ²⁶ For a prostitute will bring you to poverty, **but sleeping with another man's wife will cost you your life.**
- ²⁷ **Can a man scoop a flame into his lap and not have his clothes catch on fire?**
- ²⁸ **Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet?**
- ²⁹ **So it is with the man who sleeps with another man's wife. He who embraces her will not go unpunished.**

- I remember talking to a man not too long ago and he was living in adultery with another man's wife.
- I asked him... Do you fear God?
- What is adultery anyway...it is unfaithfulness.
- Unfaithfulness **to God** and unfaithfulness **to one's spouse** and unfaithfulness **to self**.
- That brings me to the last topic today...and one more time we ask the question.
- What did you say?

#3) Divorce

Matthew 5:31-32 (NLT)

- ³¹ "You have heard the law that says, 'A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.'
- ³² But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

- I don't know why, but I feel a sense of frustration in Jesus' words when I read this one.
- The law...Jesus came to accomplish it and these people have heard that the law says it's acceptable to give your wife a written notice of divorce.
- That part is true, but Jesus knows the root of this one as well.
- **The root** of murder was anger and **the root** of adultery was lust.
- What is **the root** of divorce...what did you say?

Mark 10:1-9 (NLT)

¹ Then Jesus left Capernaum and went down to the region of Judea and into the area east of the Jordan River. Once again crowds gathered around him, and as usual he was teaching them.

² Some Pharisees came and **tried to trap him** with this question: “**Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?**”

³ Jesus answered them with a question: “**What did Moses say in the law about divorce?**”

⁴ “Well, he permitted it,” they replied. “He said a man can give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away.”

⁵ But Jesus responded, “**He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your hard hearts.**

⁶ But ‘God made them male and female’ from the beginning of creation.

⁷ ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife,

⁸ and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one,

⁹ **let no one split apart what God has joined together.**”

- Hard hearts...the root of all divorce.
- Hard hearted unfaithfulness.
- You can, but you won’t.
- You should, but you didn’t.
- Marriage was established by God and in this text Jesus is quoting the marriage announcement of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
- Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman.
- Marriage is an earthy reflection of the covenant that each of us have with God.
- Marriage is a covenant of faithfulness...until we are parted by death, as God as my witness, I give you my promise.
- Marriage is two becoming one, like being born again is two becoming one with Christ.
- The Apostle Paul describes the church as the bride of Christ...we are married to Him...two have become one in a life changing covenant...a covenant initiated by the Bridegroom Jesus.
- And what did the Bridegroom Jesus say...

Matthew 5:31-32 (NLT)

³¹ “**You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’**

³² **But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.**

- Unless she has been unfaithful...did you catch that part?
- Jesus doesn’t ask any of us to live with an unfaithful wife/husband (you can, but you don’t have to)?
- Unfaithfulness is a show stopper....a way out of the covenant, but beware of what He just said!
- What did you say?

Mark 10:9 (NLT)

⁹ **let no one split apart what God has joined together.**”

- Unfaithfulness is a show stopper...unfaithfulness is idolatry and God will not tolerate idolatry (cheater).

Closing

- The root of murder is anger and the root of adultery is lust.
- Murder and adultery will ruin you and anger and lust will do the same.
- Unfaithfulness leads to divorce in the physical realm of marriage and also in the spiritual realm of marriage...be careful what you ask for!
- Unfaithfulness was the result of a hard heart and that hard heart led to a breaking of the covenant...be careful what you ask for.
- Faithful to the end...that was the design of a marriage between a man and a woman.
- Faithful to the end...that was the design of a marriage between Christ and His Church.
- But I would be wrong to not tell you that some people will become unfaithful AFTER the spiritual wedding to this Bridegroom named Jesus.
- What did you say?

Jude 1:5 (NLT)

⁵ So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, **but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful.**

- We are all from Egypt!
- We have all been invited into a covenant relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom.
- This Bridegroom Jesus has broken the chains of our bondage and we have become one with Christ.

1 John 2:24-27 (NLT)

²⁴ So **you must remain faithful** to what you have been taught from the beginning. **If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father.** [What if you don't]

²⁵ And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

²⁶ I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.

²⁷ But you have received the Holy Spirit, and **he lives within you,** [two have become one] so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, **remain in fellowship with Christ.**

- Remain faithful, remain in fellowship....There is no covenant without faithfulness!
- Unfaithfulness is idolatry...a form of spiritual adultery.
- I've got one overriding goal for my life and that is on the last day to bow before my Savior and Lord and hear Him say...**Well Done, my good and Faithful Servant!**

NCC Roots Class...Session #5---Vows, Revenge & Enemies 10/2/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we continue our 8-week long journey together that will focus specifically on the teachings of Jesus on a mount/high place next to the Sea of Galilee.
- Vows, Revenge and Enemies.
- I've titled this series "What Did You Say?" because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but **my words will never disappear.**

- If that is true, and I'm convinced it is...then I want to know... "What did you say?"
- The Sermon on the Mount is the longest and most detailed single teaching of Jesus in the Bible.
- Today we begin with verse 33 of Matthew 5...and ask Jesus again...What did you say?

#1) Vows...what did you say?

Matthew 5:33-37 (NLT)

³³ "You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.' ³⁴ **But I say,** do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!' because heaven is God's throne. ³⁵ And do not say, 'By the earth!' because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Do not even say, 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. ³⁷ Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

- Let's begin here with the origin of vows in the Law of Moses that is referred to by Jesus.

Leviticus 19:12 (NLT)

¹² "Do not bring shame on **the name of your God** by using it to swear **falsely**. I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 6:13 (NLT)

¹³ **You must fear the LORD** your God and serve him. When you take an oath, **you must use only his name.**

- The Children of Israel were taught by God to keep their vows by making their vows in the name of God...to vow/swear in the name of God.
- Now Jesus comes and "What did you say"...don't make any vows.
- Was this an absolute prohibition from Jesus...against swearing in the name of God or taking a vow in the name of God?
- Or, is there another point here...let's look at Jesus after this sermon on the mount.
- Jesus is called to testify (under oath) to the high priest of Israel and that high priest calls on the name of God...

Matthew 26:62-64 (NLT)

⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "**I**

demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

⁶⁴ Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

- Now compare that scene to what we used to consider normal in witness testimony in an American court room...DO YOU SOLEMNLY SWEAR TO TELL THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP YOU GOD?
- This is an effort to use the name of God to force the truth about certain issue.
- The Apostle Paul calls on **the name of Jesus** to validate the truth of his words to the Church at Rome.

Romans 9:1 (NLT)

¹ With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it.

- So what’s this about anyway...Those of us who have been born again into Christ should speak every word as truth.
- We must speak every word as if we are under oath.
- Have you ever heard anyone start a sentence with you like this... “ Well, To tell you the truth”?
- Does that mean they are lying when they don’t start their statement with that?
- If Jesus is truth and Jesus lives inside of me...what comes out of me must always be truth.
- It shouldn’t matter where I take an oath or not, I speak truth because I live daily in the presence of Truth.
- Truth is a person and He lives here...all the time.
- What did you say?

Matthew 5:37 (NLT)

³⁷ Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

- Satan is a liar and there is “no truth” in him.
- Jesus is the truth and there is “no lie” in Him...and He is in us!
- Is Jesus cancelling the law or fulfilling the Law with His very presence?

#2) Revenge...What did you say?

Matthew 5:38-42 (NLT)

³⁸ “You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

³⁹ **But I say**, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.

⁴⁰ If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.

⁴¹ If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.

⁴² Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

- What did you say...the law...Murder is now about anger, Adultery is now about lust and Divorce is really about heart hearted unfaithfulness?
- Vows are now about the presence of truth and Truth is a person.
- Truth didn't come to cancel the Law, but to fulfill the Law by His very presence.
- Just like the topic of "vows" being based on the Old Testament Law...so is this issue of justice and revenge.
- An eye for an eye was justice in the sight of God...it is His law.
- However these laws and systems of justice were not based on "Revenge", but on justice and compensation...let's go back and look at the origin.

Exodus 21:22-25 (NLT)

²² "Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely. If no further injury results, the man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman's husband demands and the judges approve.

²³ But if there is further injury, **the punishment must match the injury**: a life for a life,

²⁴ an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,

²⁵ a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.

- And now, here comes Jesus and He takes justice to a new level...how (murder=anger, Adultery=lust)?
- First, He acknowledges that evil is real and there are evil people all around us.
- Jesus's teaching here doesn't change the justice of God at all...it clarifies how we are to confront evil.
- Jesus doesn't deny that there is darkness...He explains the best way to use light.

Matthew 5:38-39 (NLT)

³⁸ "You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

³⁹ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.

- There is a practical and a spiritual application here.
- The Romans ruled Israel in Jesus' day and a Roman soldier (by Roman law) could order anyone nearby to help him carry his gear for a milion...just short of our modern mile.
- What is the best way for light to affect darkness...now ask Jesus again...what did you say?

Matthew 5:41-42 (NLT)

⁴¹ If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.

⁴² Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

- Does this mean Christians are weak?
- Does this mean that Christians set ourselves out to be abused and mistreated?
- When someone slaps you...what is justice?
- This is tough stuff and again I must ask Jesus...what did you say?

- Now, let me read the same **high priest/Jesus** encounter as I read before the topic of vows.

Mark 14:60-65 (NLT)

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, “Well, aren’t you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?”

⁶¹ But **Jesus was silent and made no reply**. Then the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² Jesus said, **“I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”**

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Why do we need other witnesses?

⁶⁴ You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” “Guilty!” they all cried. “He deserves to die!”

⁶⁵ Then some of them began to **spit at him**, and they blindfolded him and **beat him with their fists**. “Prophecy to us,” they jeered. And the guards **slapped him** as they took him away.

- What was the best way for light to affect darkness, then and now?
- I don’t believe that makes Christians pacifist, but it does require that we are filled with the light and humility of Christ...when it comes to justice and revenge.
- Listen Church...**there is a justice**, but it cannot be ours.
- **There is a revenge**, a payment for evil, but that must also be His.
- Notice the **deep contrast** in this scene of Jesus in the final hours of his earthly life, before the cross.

Matthew 26:52-54 (NLT)

⁵² “Put away your sword,” Jesus told him. **“Those who use the sword will die by the sword.**

⁵³ Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? ⁵⁴ But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?”

Luke 22:35-38 (NLT)

³⁵ Then Jesus asked them, **“When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler’s bag, or extra clothing, did you need anything?”** “No,” they replied.

³⁶ **“But now,”** he said, **“take your money and a traveler’s bag. And if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one!”** ³⁷ For the time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: ‘He was counted among the rebels.’ Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true.”

³⁸ “Look, Lord,” they replied, **“we have two swords among us.”** **“That’s enough,”** he said.

- Do you live by the sword...**your** power, **your** justice, **your** control...you will die by that same sword.
- The sword is not the issue, but that way of thinking is.
- We are at war, but this war cannot and will not be won by a sword, only Christ.
- Jesus has a sword and He will be wearing it when He returns to strike down the nations, but until that day we have been called to live as Jesus did.

- I'm not sure sometimes where that line really is (to fight or yield), but I trust the Holy Spirit to lead me when that time comes.
- How many families have been destroyed because one person would not yield or submit or say I'm sorry...you want your justice and your revenge.
- How many relationships have been broken because a person would not turn that cheek so that light could chase away the darkness?
- Do you remember how we started this series with the beatitudes?

Matthew 5:5 (NLT)

⁵ God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

- Humble people will turn that other cheek and trust Jesus to determine if that eye deserves and eye.
- Humble people will carry that person's luggage so that light will have access to darkness.
- I've always wondered if one of the Roman officers that slapped Jesus after the trial was the same Roman soldier that confessed His deity at the cross.

Matthew 27:27-31 (NIV)

²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him.

²⁸ **They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,**

²⁹ and then **twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him.** "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said.

³⁰ They spit on him, and **took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.**

³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Mark 15:39 (NLT)

³⁹ When the **Roman officer** who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, "**This man truly was the Son of God!**"

- When he saw how He had died...light pierced his darkness.
- When they see how we LIVE...the light of Christ will also pierce their darkness.
- When I saw the video of those Ethiopian Christians being executed by ISIS they were not wailing and screaming and fighting, but quietly praying.

1 John 4:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.

¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

#3) Enemies...What did you say?

- We finish today by asking Jesus "What did you say" about love and enemies.
- If you struggled with the "revenge" topic you're going to really struggle now.

- Again, Jesus takes the Law to a new level.

Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)

- ⁴³ “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy.
⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!
⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.
⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much.
⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.
⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- Love your enemies.
- Pray for those who persecute you.
- Only then, do we act like and reflect the love of God.
- Why, because I used to be an enemy of God and then HE loved me.
- I did nothing to make Him love me...He just loved me because He is love.
- The true children of God are filled with the love of God and that love will splash onto those around us.
- It's pretty easy to love those who love you back, but what if that was how God did it?
- What if God's love and mercy only applied to those who loved Him first...then no one would be saved.

Romans 3:10-12 (NLT)

- ¹⁰ As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous— not even one.
¹¹ No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.
¹² All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.”

Closing

- Vows, Revenge and Enemies...Now we know what Jesus said about all three.
- **Vows...**When you speak...speak the truth as if every word is under an oath in the presence of God.
- **Revenge...**Hold onto that sword, but don't dare live by it...Jesus has a sword too.
- **Enemies...**Love those messed up people around you and pray for them, even if they make your life miserable.
- Who knows, that way of life that you choose to live under the power of the Holy Spirit will make them stand up and say...That Jesus, surely He is the Son of God.
- The power of the Holy Spirit is the very presence of God.
- The power of the Holy Spirit is Christ in us.
- What is all of this teaching about...the very presence of God is within your reach.
- Your Presence Lord...is the Kingdom of Heaven...the Treasure!

NCC Roots Class...Session#6---Giving to Needy, Prayer, Fasting 10/9/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we continue our 8-week long journey together through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.
- We've covered Jesus' teaching on the 8 steps from the kingdom on men to the Kingdom of Heaven.
- We've covered Jesus' teaching on the Law, Anger, Adultery, Divorce, Vows, Revenge and
- Enemies.
- I've titled this series "What Did You Say?" because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear

- If that is true, and I'm convinced it is...then I want to know... "What did you say?"
- Jesus' teaching...they will never disappear.
- Jesus's teachings are the very foundation of our American society...did you know that?
- Did you know the teachings of Jesus are the basis for the freedom we experience in a civil society?
- Today we begin with Chapter 6...and ask Jesus again...What did you say?

Matthew 6:1-4 (NLT)

¹ "Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³ But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

- What if someone came up to you today and said "watch out"?
- It's a call to pay attention and focus...what did Jesus want us to focus on?
- Good deeds...I hope you all have them...they are like a good fruit that comes from a good tree that comes from a good seed.
- Good deeds are the result of good seeds and they represent the harvest for the Gardener...who gave us good seeds in the first place.
- This "watch out" message of Jesus isn't about the harvest of good deeds, is it?
- It's about taking credit for the harvest of good deeds.

Matthew 6:1 (NLT)

¹ "Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.

- Do the good deeds...yes...but do them without drawing attention to yourself.
- Why...because drawing attention to yourself takes the glory from the Gardener and you don't even know how to make seeds...you just sow them.

- This isn't just a "watch out" moment from Jesus, but it's a "warning" from Jesus...you will lose your reward from the Gardener in Heaven if you touch the glory in the gardens of earth.
- Would you really trade in a pat on the back here for a "well done" from the Gardener?
- Which one do you really think will last the longest?
- What did you say Jesus...the hypocrites blow trumpets to draw attention to their good deeds and in doing so the temporary cheers of the crowd will replace the eternal praise of the Gardener.
- It's a bad trade...don't do it... Jesus warns...watch out!
- Instead...this is the right attitude.

Matthew 6:3-4 (NLT)

³ But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

- Notice that Jesus says "When you give", not "If you give".
- Give to those who are in need, but do so without drawing attention to yourself.
- Give to those in need, but don't look for any response in this lifetime...don't make that trade.
- Give and know this... the Gardener that gave you a seed to sow...knows the heart and life of every seed sower and will reward every seed sower in the eternal kingdom.
- Let me say this...there are many quiet givers in this room today and I know the Father, the Gardener knows.
- I want to reveal 3 fundamental issues to this topic of giving...
 1. You have to let go of something before you can give it.
 2. You can't give what you don't have, so someone had to give it to you first.
 3. Why is it so difficult to let go of something that someone gave to you?
- Can I give you a word from the Gardener before we move onto prayer and fasting?

Luke 18:29-30 (NLT)

²⁹ "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, ³⁰ will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come."

- Those seeds that you got from the Gardener...that you turned loose of...to help someone else...will produce a harvest, many times over, in this life and in the life to come.
- Those seeds will never multiply or produce until you plant them, by giving them away.
- And by the way, they weren't your seeds anyway!

Prayer

- What did you say...Jesus?

Matthew 6:5-8 (NLT)

⁵ "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.

⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in

private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. ⁷ **“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!**

- **When you give**, don’t do it like the hypocrites of this world.
- **When you pray**, don’t do that like the hypocrites of this world either.
- Do you see the common thread of Jesus regarding giving and praying...to draw attention to self.
- Giving and praying are both...best done in private!
- Why...our heart wants to touch the glory...draw attention to self.
- Giving and praying both have rewards...did you notice that?

Matthew 6:6 (NLT)

⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. **Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**

- I want to read to you a devotion written by A W Tozer on this issue of private prayer.

"Retire from the world each day to some private spot, even if it be only the bedroom (for a while I retreated to the furnace room for want of a better place). Stay in the secret place til the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God's presence envelops you. Deliberately tune out the unpleasant sounds and come out of your closet determined not to hear them. Listen for the inward Voice till you learn to recognize it. Stop trying to compete with others. Give yourself to God, and then be what and who you are without regard to what others think. Reduce your interests to a few. Don't try to know what will be of no service to you. . Avoid the digest type of mind - short bits of unrelated facts, cute stories and bright sayings. Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work. Practice candor, childlike honesty, humility. Pray for a single eye. Read less, but read more of what is important to your inner life. Call home your roving thoughts. Gaze on Christ with the eyes of your soul. Practice spiritual concentration.

- What is the present reward of this type of prayer life...YOU WILL KNOW GOD.
- His Presence is the treasure...His presence is the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Don’t babble...you will never know God through babble.
- Be honest with God...you will never know God by trying to hide your real self (He knows everything).
- This “what did you say” moment from Jesus doesn’t make public prayer wrong, not at all.
- Public prayer was part of the Jewish culture as they began to know God, but the real power of prayer is in the closet.
- Jesus then goes on to tell us some specifics on prayer...

Matthew 6:9-13 (NLT)

⁹ Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

- Jesus is teaching us to make this personal and then live it out loud as you begin to know God.
- 1. My life keeps His Name Holy!
- 2. My life and my actions are looking for His Kingdom to come...soon.
- 3. My life is surrendered so that His will is manifest in me, just like it is and will be in Heaven.
- 4. My life acknowledges and depends on daily bread from Him.
- 5. My life acknowledges my sinfulness and cries out for His mercy and forgiveness.
- 6. My life then receives His forgiveness and turns around and freely gives it away to others.
- 7. My life requires much time in the closet of prayer...praying that I will not fall into temptation.
- 8. My life acknowledges that the only way to be rescued from the evil one is the power of Christ that comes from KNOWING HIM.
- The Lord's Prayer is not just a prayer...it is a life of knowing God...a life that knows God and then reveals God to others.
- But to my surprise most people stop reading at verse 13...it doesn't stop there.
- What did you say?

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- One of these days we are all going to find out big the word “IF” is.
- “IF” infers a condition—IF you forgive others, you will be forgiven, but what “IF” you don’t.
- You don’t have to guess that answer to that what if you don’t question. ..what did you say?
- If you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

That brings up our final topic today...Fasting.

- Before I read it to you I want you to notice four things in common with all three topics **giving, praying and fasting.**
- 1. “When you”...they all begin with “when you”, not if you.
- 2. They are all best done in secret.
- 3. They are all practiced by hypocrites.
- 4. They all have rewards...what did you say...they all have rewards.

Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶ “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

- I’m not sure the exact year that I came to know the power of fasting to reveal the presence of God in my life.
- I can remember the time when I felt like God was going to open a door for me to go into some type of full time preaching ministry.

- I was so wanting to obey God, but I was also worried about missing what HE had planned, or being deceived about what He was doing.
 - So, I began fasting...I fasted on Monday's for 3 years...asking God to take me to the exact place that He wanted me.
 - Some of you right now might say...I thought this was supposed to be done in secret...it was at that time.
 - Today is my testimony and that will never be my secret!
 - That time of prayer and fasting was how I came to know God and the purpose of God in my life.
 - I didn't tell anyone that I was fasting...if you weren't very, very close to me...you would have never know about my fasting.
 - That time of fasting led me here some 24 years ago...and God began to move, in me and through me and all around me.
 - Every time I felt the need to make a major change or decision I would again start to fast.
 - I remember how difficult the decision was to build this worship center complex...I wanted to make sure that it was the will of God and that it was from Him.
 - I fasted for 14 days...and I knew it was from God!
 - I didn't tell anyone, except those closest to me.
 - Since then I have had several occasions to fast, though not for 14 days.
 - Why...There is something amazing that happens when you take food out of your life.
 - A sense of spiritual clarity...that I have not found outside of fasting.
 - But why...it is in all three of today's topics...what did you say?
1. "When you"...they all begin with "when you", not if you.
 2. They are all best done in secret.
 3. They are all practiced by hypocrites.
 4. They all have rewards...what did you say...they all have rewards.
- When you give to the needy, without seeking any reward in this life you will receive a reward.
 - What reward...you will know God...you will experience His presence.
 - When you pray, in secret, not like a fake hypocrite...you will receive a reward.
 - What reward...you will know God...you will experience His presence.
 - When you fast, in secret, without drawing attention to self as a faker...you will receive a reward.
 - What reward...you will know God...you will experience His presence.

Giving to the needy...acknowledges that the Gardener gave me some seeds to plant and produce a harvest and they can only produce a harvest when I sow them. And by the way their not my seeds (money, time and talents).

Prayer...develops and builds a relationship with the Gardener that empowers me recognize His voice. When you talk to someone often enough...it's easy to recognize His voice and not be fooled by an imposter.

When you talk to someone enough/spending a lot of time with them in quiet... you will become like them by taking on their attributes and traits.

Fasting... When you take away your daily bread you will very soon begin to know the true Bread that came down from heaven. It's like experiencing the difference between manna and Jesus.

Closing

- What did you say?
- I want to close today by reading verses 1-18...putting all three topics together as we say one more time...what did you say Jesus?

Matthew 6:1-18 (NLT)

¹ “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³ But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. ⁵ “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. ⁷ “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. ¹⁴ “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. ¹⁶ “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

- The very foundation of our democracy...without this civil order derived by the very words of Christ there can be no order.
- And know this...all of them are with your reach...within the reach of everyone.
- You can give.
- You can pray.
- You can fast.
- You can experience the very presence of God.
- You can know the King and you can experience the very Kingdom of Heaven.
- You can take hold of this treasure and this King.
- The question is “will you”?
- **Watch out**...the day in which you can...may be drawing to an end.

NCC Roots Class...Session #7---Money, Worry and Judging 10/16/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we continue our 8-week long journey through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.
- Today, we have three hot button topics.
- I've titled this series "What Did You Say?" because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but **my words will never disappear.**

- If that is true, and I'm convinced it is...then I want to know... "What did you say?"
- Today we'll finish chapter 6 and head for home (plan to finish Sermon on the Mount next week).
- Today we start with money and ask Jesus again... "What did you say?"

Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT)

¹⁹ "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

- Don't do it, but why not...it's a waste of time and you only have a short time to prepare for such a long time.
- What did you say...Don't spend your short time on short time things...spend your short time on long time things.
- Why...**number one** reason is...your short time things only last a short time and then you will lose them all...and fire is coming...the day of the Lord is coming...Heaven's coming!

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NLT)

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. **Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it** will be found to deserve judgment. ¹¹ **Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live,** ¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. **On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames.** ¹³ But **we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth** he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

- Yes there are moths, rust and thieves, but there is also a fire coming.
- This fire is going to destroy all that the Word of God has not preserved.
- **Number one** it's a bad investment, but...
- **Number two** has to do with our heart and treasure.

Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

²¹ Wherever **your treasure** is, there the desires of **your heart** will also be.

- All of creation is moving toward its hunger and thirst...all of us right now are moving toward our hunger and thirst.
- What you are hungry and thirsty for **will become your treasure** and that's where you will find the true desire of your heart.
- And number two reveals a heart condition that could be terminal.
- Jesus then turns the focus **from the heart to the eyes**...don't miss this...what did you say?

Matthew 6:22-23 (NLT)

²² “**Your eye** is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

- Do you know why it's a bad idea to text and drive?
- Because your eye has a phone in it instead of the road in it.
- The eyes of man point toward the destination of man.
- So, what are you **looking for**....I can answer that by... what are you **looking at**.
- What did you say... “Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body”...a portal to the soul.
- Are you **looking for** light...then you will need to **look at** light?
- Are you **looking for** heaven...then what have you been **looking at** this past week?
- Do you want eternal treasure...then quit spending all your time **looking at** temporary junk.
- Now, let's ask Jesus again...what did you say?

Matthew 6:19-24 (NLT)

¹⁹ “Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. ²² “Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

- Did you know that God wants you to have great wealth?
- He just wants you to have the great wealth that doesn't have an expiration date on it.
- He wants you to have the kind of wealth that doesn't leave you in darkness.

Romans 8:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ And since we are his children, **we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.** But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

- Do you know what that means...all that belongs to Christ will be shared with us...it becomes ours.
- How long will that great wealth last...forever!

- Would you trade the temporary wealth of earth for the eternal wealth that's been promised to God's children?
- That depends upon what you call treasure.
- That depends upon what you are hungry and thirsty for...all of creation is moving toward its hunger and thirst.
- That depends on what you are **looking for** and what you are **looking at**.
- Let me read this and as I do...Let me ask...what is this worth...

Revelation 21:5-7 (NLT)

⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."⁶ And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. **To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. [what are you hungry and thirsty for?]**⁷ **All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.**

- What are you looking for...that will determine what you are looking at right now.
- His Presence...the Kingdom of Heaven
- So here comes the test...**are you worried these days** (upcoming election, economy, godlessness, persecution of Christians, middle east war, WW3)?
- What makes you worry...is worry wrong?
- Is there a connection between what you are **looking for** and **looking at** and **worry**?
- Jesus...what did you say?

Matthew 6:24-34 (NLT)

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. **[why did Jesus single out money/treasure]**

²⁵ "That is why **I tell you not to worry about everyday life**—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?²⁶ Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?²⁷ **Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?**²⁸ "And **why worry** about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing,²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are.³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?³¹ **"So don't worry about these things,** saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?'³² **These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers,** but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.

³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.³⁴ **"So don't worry about tomorrow,** for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

- Is there a connection between looking for, looking at and worry?
- What did you say...**Eat, drink and wear**...these things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers!
- Do you need to eat, drink and wear clothes...yes please do, but that's not the question is it?
- What dominates your thoughts....what you are **looking at** announces what you're **looking for**.

- Jesus didn't say...believers should be hungry, thirsty and naked...did He?
- What did He say?

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

³³ **Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.**

- First things first...seek God above everything else and live righteously.
- When you seek the Kingdom you are seeking Him and if you seek Him you will find Him.

Jeremiah 29:13-14 (NLT) Old Testament Message to Captive Israel

¹³ If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

¹⁴ I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."

Acts 17:27-28 (NLT) New Testament Message to Gentiles in Greece

²⁷ "His purpose was for the nations **to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him**—though he is not far from any one of us.

- By the way...that produces a righteous life and you can stop worrying about being hungry, thirsty and naked...FOREVER.
- **Money, worry and now judging**...what did you say?
- Before I read this new section about "judging" its interesting to me that Jesus uses "worry and eyes" to reveal this lesson as well.

Matthew 7:1-6 (NLT)

¹ "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.

² For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

³ "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?

⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye?

⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

⁶ "Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

- I wonder if this might be the most misquoted and misunderstood section of the Bible today?
- It seems to be the only part of the Bible that unbelievers want to memorize.
- But I also want to be very careful and ask Jesus...what did you say?
- Do you remember "the eye" and "worry" from the last topic?
- What did you say...Why **"worry"** about a speck in your friend's **"eye"** when you have a log in your own?
- What are you **looking for** and what are you **looking at**?

- What worries you is the very thing that **takes** your time and energy.
- I used to fly a lot and I could give the flight attendant announcement about oxygen masks that might fall from the ceiling.
- Do you know why it's a good idea to put the oxygen mask **on you first**?
- Do you know why it's a good idea for you to **get that log out of your eye first**?
- If you **can't breathe** and if you **can't see**...it's unlikely you're going to be of much use to anyone!
- So, let me ask a very important "**judging others**" question today...are there standards of behavior for those who belong to the church of Jesus Christ?
- Or is that judging others?

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NLT)

⁹ When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin.

¹⁰ But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that.

¹¹ I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. ¹² It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. ¹³ God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

- Do you think I, as a minister of the Gospel of Christ should live by a certain standard or is that judging?
- What would you think if you found out that I was addicted to pornography...should I still remain in this position?
- Is that judging?
- What if I was found to be living in adultery...would it be judgmental to ask me to resign?
- What if I cheated people and what if I was found to be secretly in idolatry (reading the Koran and praying to Allah, through the prophet Mouhammed)?
- **Do you know what the world is shouting out today...don't put that oxygen mask on your face because it makes me feel uncomfortable when you wear that mask while the plane's crashing!**
- Putting on the oxygen mask while people around me refuse to do so (even if I offer to help them) is not judging others...it's an attempt to save their lives.
- Acknowledging the sin that used to blind my own eyes and proclaiming the power of Christ that supernaturally takes logs out of people's eyes is not judging others...it's an attempt to save others from forever blindness.
- Light has come into the world...put on the light and the darkness will become offended...put it on anyway.
- Jesus, what did you say?

John 3:16-21 (NLT)

¹⁶ "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not **to judge** the world,

but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

- The Word will be out judge!

John 12:44-50 (NLT2)

⁴⁴ Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. ⁴⁵ For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. ⁴⁷ I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. ⁴⁸ But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. ⁴⁹ I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”

Closing

- I don’t want to be anyone’s judge, but there is a righteous judge that will judge the hearts of everyone, including mine.
- Some people are going to believe and some people aren’t...that’s so far above my understanding.
- Why do some people get it and some people refuse (two thief’s on cross)?
- There is a lot I don’t know and understand, but God has given me eyes that see and ears that hear and this is the truth of God.
- I don’t want to be a Hypocrite when I meet my judge, but I also don’t want to stand in front of that judge having not dealt with that log in my eye so that I might help save that guy that is staggering in blindness right next to me.

Matthew 7:5-6 (NLT)

⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

⁶ “Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

- Let’s resolve ourselves as a church today to allow the light of Christ to reveal what in our eyes today!
- What are you looking for and what are you looking at...that is what’s in your eye right now!
- Some of you need to get that out of your eye right now...and I’m not trying to judge you, but I’m trying to save you from blindness that leads to poverty and darkness.
- Money, Worry and Judging...I told you they were hot button topics.
- Now you know what Jesus said about all three.

NCC Roots Class...Session #8-Keep it up, Golden Rule & Gate, Fruit Tree and The

End 10/23/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- Today we finish our 8-week journey together that were focused specifically on the teachings of Jesus on a mount/high place next to the Sea of Galilee.
- People have called it “The Sermon on the Mount” because the Gospel of Matthew specifically says that Jesus went up on the mountain, sat down and began to teach the people.
- I’ve titled this series “What Did You Say?” because of this verse from the Book of Matthew.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

³⁵ **Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.**

- These Words of God are forever Words and to those who believe them they are forever life.

1 Peter 1:23-25 (NLT)

²³ For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because **it comes from the eternal, living word of God.**

²⁴ As the Scriptures say, “People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades.

²⁵ But **the word of the Lord remains forever.**” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

- If that is true, and I’m convinced it is...then I want to know... “What did you say?”
- Today’s title makes it clear that I had to work very hard to get all of this into this last session.
- Today we begin with Jesus saying... “Keep on asking”.

Matthew 7:7-11 (NLT)

⁷ **“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”** ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ **“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead?**

¹⁰ **Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not!**

¹¹ **So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.**

- What did you say Jesus...Keep on asking, Keep on seeking and Keep on knocking...why Jesus!
- Why, because many of you won’t...keep on...why?
- Because you get distracted...and therein lies the warning and challenge from Jesus...Keep on.
- When will it be ok to stop seeking, knocking and asking...when you get everything that your Father wants for you...then you can stop and relax?
- When do you think that will be?
- Look at what Paul tells us the Father is doing and why Jesus is telling us to “keep on seeking, knocking and asking”.

Romans 8:29-30 (NLT)

²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and **he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.** ³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them

to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, **he gave them his glory.**

- To be like his Son and to receive His glory....this is the Kingdom of Heaven (His Presence).
- My mind can't really take that in, but I'm determined to keep on seeking, knocking and asking.

1 John 3:1-3 (NLT)

¹ See how very much our Father loves us, **for he calls us his children,** **do you know how to give good gifts to your children** and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. ² Dear friends, **we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him,** for we will see him as he really is. ³ And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

#2) The Golden Rule and the Golden Gate

Matthew 7:12 (NLT)

¹² “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

- What do you want...then that's what you should give to others.
- If you want to be loved, then you must love others.
- If you want to be respected, then you must respect others.
- People in the church have labeled this verse the “golden rule” ... I suppose because Jesus announces that all the law and the prophets teaching are inside of this simple truth.
- There is another place that Jesus says that same thing...what did you say?

Matthew 22:37-40 (NLT)

³⁷ Jesus replied, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

- This Golden Rule leads to a Golden Gate...not the one in San Francisco.
- This teaching of Jesus doesn't seem to be terribly complicated, so I wonder why “so few” will find this golden gate...what did you say?

Matthew 7:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ “You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way.

¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

- Only a few...does that offend you?
- What did you say...**only a few ever find it**...why...is it hidden or out of reach?
- No, the golden gate into God's eternal kingdom is not hidden or out of reach, but there is a deceiver that giving bad directions to the gate.

- Look at this very next verse as we ask Jesus...what did you say?

Matthew 7:15-20 (NLT)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.

¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit.

¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.

²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

- There is a golden rule that leads to a golden gate, but there is a “not so golden liar” on that road that leads to the golden gate.
- Jesus tells us that Satan is a liar, the father of all lies and he recruits liars to work for him.
- Jesus tells us that this liar hates the truth and there is no truth in him.
- Jesus tells us that Satan’s purpose and outcome are exactly opposite of His own.
- Jesus’ plan makes us sheep (does that offend you) that follow our Shepherd.
- Satan’s plan makes also makes sheep, but these sheep don’t follow the Good Shepherd.
- The problem is that these two different shepherds have two different purposes that lead to two different gates.
- Jesus is the way, truth and the life that leads to a golden gate.
- Satan is here to kill, steal and destroy and that will take you to another gate....a gate called death and hell.
- But how can you tell the difference...let’s ask Jesus again...what did you say?

Matthew 7:15-20 (NLT)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.

¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit.

¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.

²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

- Look at the fruit....Jesus said...look at the fruit.
- What did you say Jesus...**you can identify people by their actions.**
- Let me make a very important social and political point on this today.
- There are two major social issues dividing our nation today and they are even dividing many churches as well...abortion and sexual sin, including homosexuality (LGBTQ and Gender madness).
- Have you ever noticed that both of these divisive social issues have one thing in common...neither of them “produce life”.
- Jesus said that Satan would come to disguised as a harmless sheep, but he is actually a vicious wolf that comes to kill, steal and destroy.

- Should the church (those who have been truly born again) be confused or neutral on the issue of abortion or homosexuality/sexual sin?

1 Peter 1:23-25 (NLT)

²³ For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because **it comes from the eternal, living word of God.**

- Is the eternal living Word of God unclear on these issues?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NLT)

⁹ Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality,

¹⁰ or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.

¹¹ Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- What did you say Jesus...you can identify people by their actions.
- What did you say Jesus...

Matthew 7:15-20 (NLT)

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.

¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit.

¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.

²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

True Disciples

- So, how can you tell...is there a sure fire way to tell a follower of Jesus?
- Can you know for sure if someone is born again of the water and Spirit?
- Can you know for sure...what would that really look like?
- Let's ask Jesus...what did you say?

Matthew 7:21-23 (NLT)

²¹ "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.

²² On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.'

²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

- What did you say...did you just say...there will be losers?

- What did you say... **Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.**
- Does that surprise you?
- Does that offend you?
- Do you find that sentence insensitive and intolerant?
- If you do, I must tell you as I ask this question of Jesus (What did you say) one more time...it gets worse...or is it better to actually know the Truth?

Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT)

²⁴ “**Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.** ²⁵ **Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.**

²⁶ **But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.**

²⁷ **When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”.**

- Listens and follows...can’t we just listen?
- Can an apple tree be an apple tree if it produces pears?
- Can you pick grapes from a thorn bush?
- My question is this...who would tell you that you can pick pears from an apple tree?
- Who would tell you that you can pick grapes from a thorn bush...a liar!
- Who would tell you that you could give your life to Christ and live your life for Satan, His very adversary?
- Who would tell you that you could be born again by the Holy Spirit (the very presence of Christ in you) and walk in open rebellion and sin against God?
- Who would tell you that you don’t have to endure to the end (keep seeking, knocking and asking)?
- Who would tell you that you it doesn’t really matter how you live and how you treat others, it’s just what you believe?
- Who would tell you that everyone wins and there are no losers at that golden gate into the Kingdom of God?
- Who would tell you that there really isn’t a fire waiting for these fruitless trees just behind that wide gate?
- I really can’t help myself...I must ask Jesus again....what did you say?

Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT)

²⁴ “**Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise,** like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ **Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.**

²⁶ **But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.**

²⁷ **When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”.**

- This is not salvation by works, this is work of salvation!
- We are saved by faith and can I ask you who God used as a model of and this saving faith?

- Abraham...could Abraham believe God, have faith in God without following God's call.
- To leave his home, to count the stars, to sacrifice his son.
- What and Who are you building your house/life upon (rock or sand).
- There is only one difference between the sand and the rock.
- There is only one difference between the standing and collapsing....when the storm comes.
- Did you see it...one thing separates...one thing!
- The Rock House people heard the teaching and they followed the teaching.
- The Sand House people heard the same teaching, but they never followed it, never lived it, never obeyed it and they collapsed when the storm came.
- The collapse of this house was a mighty crash...hell is a mighty crash!

Closing-The End

- That's it...that's Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in 8 sessions.
- All that's left is 2 verses...how they responded to His teaching.
- That's all that's left for us today as well...how will we respond to the Words of Jesus.
- This is what **they** did...

Matthew 7:28-29 (NLT)

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,

²⁹ for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

- Are you amazed at His teaching?
- Do you recognize His authority?
- Do you see that He is not like anyone else and there is no one like HIM!

John 7:45-52 (NLT2)

⁴⁵ When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, "Why didn't you bring him in?" ⁴⁶ **"We have never heard anyone speak like this!" the guards responded.** ⁴⁷ "Have you been led astray, too?" the Pharisees mocked. ⁴⁸ "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him?" ⁴⁹ This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God's curse is on them!" ⁵⁰ Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. ⁵¹ "Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?" he asked. ⁵² They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!"

- I end where I started today...and ask this final question?
- Is **this** Scripture talking about you?

1 Peter 1:23-25 (NLT)

²³ For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because **it comes from the eternal, living word of God.**

²⁴ As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades.

²⁵ **But the word of the Lord remains forever.**" And **that word is the Good News that was preached to you.**

NCC Roots Class #9...While We Wait---Deceived---10/30/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- We've spent the past 8-weeks on the Words of Jesus...What Did You Say!
- Now we're going to spend the final 4 sessions dealing with **The Waiting**.
- I preached a series on 5-D's back in back in 2022 and I felt convicted to use these last 4-sessions to practical teaching for the time of waiting.
- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- I pray daily that these 5 things (4 sessions) cannot happen to us in the time of waiting.
- This 4-week series is called "**While We Wait**"...we're waiting for our King and we're in a spiritual war today.
- While we wait...we need to pray that God protects us from these 5 D's.
- These 5 D's are all tools of Satan that can destroy our fellowship with God and our ability to serve our Lord Jesus...the 5 D's that you DON'T want.
- **Let's start with Deceived**... *to believe something that is not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage*.
- I don't want to be deceived...I don't want to live my life believing something that's not true.
- **Synonyms**: swindle, defraud, cheat, trick, hoodwink, hoax, dupe, take in, mislead, delude
- This is a tool of Satan that is used in spiritual warfare...Satan's primary weapon is deceit.
- People will die because of this first "D"...leading to the Big D...called Death.
- Let me put it this way...Deceived is Deadly...it will kill you.
- Not knowing the Truth, believing something that is not true can kill you...do you know that?
- Let me give you an example, a real-life example that this **first "D-Deceived"** can kill you.

Genesis 3:4 (NLT2)

⁴ "**You won't die!**" the serpent replied to the woman.

- You won't die...now you must understand something here...God had already told them the truth...you **will** die if you eat of that tree.
- One of these voices in the garden is lying and one is telling the truth.
- It's a bad thing to wrong about...why...because the penalty is death...the Big D.
- He got her...Satan got her...he deceived her.
- It's always been interesting to me...why did Satan go to Eve, instead of Adam?
- I don't really know, but I do know this...

1 Timothy 2:14 (NLT2)

¹⁴ And it was **not Adam** who was **deceived by Satan**. The woman was **deceived**, and sin was the result.

- He got her...Satan deceived Eve...she believed the lie when she clearly knew the truth.
- Do you remember the definition of deceived that I read earlier... *to believe something that is not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage*.
- It's easy to be deceived when the lie looks advantageous...did Satan make it look good?
- Yes, Satan made that forbidden fruit look delicious, but there was one problem...it was a lie.

Genesis 3:4-5 (NLT2)

⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman.

⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

- Satan’s **Deception** plays on our desire for advantage, for personal gain...can you see it in this scene?
- Your eyes will be opened to see what you’ve never seen before.
- You will be like God...you can make your own rules, determine your own good and evil.
- She had already noticed the fruit looked delicious...that’s advantageous, right?
- He got her...she knew the truth, but **she got deceived**...he got her...he convinced her.

Genesis 3:6-7 (NLT2)

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

- Oh, to be deceived...but you will gain wisdom...Oh, to be deceived.
- Yes, her eyes were opened, but what did she see...shame, guilt and nakedness.
- He convinced her...Satan convinced Eve to believe a lie that was supposed to bring her some sort of advantage over her previous condition, but there is one big problem.
- It was all a lie...do you know how I know that?

Genesis 5:5 (NLT2)

⁵ Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

- Now, let me stop for a moment and make a huge point right now.
- Some of you in this room, right now, are struggling to believe this (Adam/Eve/Serpent/Garden) story to be TRUTH.
- So, I ask each of you a question...why do you think people die?
- Everyone dies, but why?
- Did you come from Adam and Eve...is that the truth?
- Did everyone on earth come originally from Adam and Eve...is that the truth or is that a lie?
- Charles Darwin said you came from chance random processes over millions of years (Origin of the Species published in 1859)...is that the truth or a lie (they can’t both be true)?
- Stephen Hawking (just a few years ago) said Charles Darwin’s theory is untenable, so he came up with another one.
- Hawking said life was carried here inside ice crystals from other galaxies OR alien creatures from other galaxies came here in the beginning.
- Is that the truth or a lie (they can’t both be true)?
- But my favorite alternative viewpoint is Bill Nye the Science Guy.

- Bill Nye said these four things while meeting with Ken Ham at the Ark Encounter in Northern Kentucky...contrasting his opinion to the Biblical view of Adam and Eve.
- 1. **It's not crazy to believe we're descendants of Martians.**
- 2. **When you're dead you're done.**
- 3. **Right and wrong is determined by a consensus of the tribe.**
- 4. **The universe and life arose by natural processes...no supernatural whatsoever.**
 - Whose right...everyone can't be right...someone must be wrong...they can't all be true.
 - Someone is telling the truth, and someone is lying.
 - Oh, to be deceived.
 - Charles Darwin, Stephen Hawking, Bill Nye and go ahead and include most academic institutions in the world today and ask the question.
 - Where did we all come from and why do people die?
 - If Charles Darwin is right...I'm not sure why any of us are here today (life would be meaningless and without hope).
 - If Stephen Hawking and Bill Nye are right...I don't think you need to come back next Sunday.
 - If they're right life has no meaning or purpose...this is all meaningless...you should eat drink and be merry until you die and go to nothingness.
 - **Bill Nye...when you're dead, you're done.**
 - But what if they have all been **deceived**, what if they are all wrong **DEAD wrong**?
 - Were they there in the beginning when Adam and Eve first lived in the Garden?
 - They weren't there, so how could they know the origin of man...the origin of our species?
 - They weren't there, so how could they know the reason for death.
 - Was anyone there in the beginning, does anyone know the real Truth?
 - There is One, One who was there in the beginning, from the dawn of creation itself.
 - Only One and guess what...some 4000 years after the time of Adam and Eve...He met with a man named Paul and told him about the origin of man and the reason for death.
 - Paul then writes down the message from the One who was there in the beginning.
 - Paul writes it down so that the world would know **the truth** about life and death...to keep us from being **deceived**.
 - This is big, right...so what did Paul write...What did the One who was **actually there** at the beginning tell him?
 - And by the way, Paul is revealing this truth to the Bill Nye's of that day in Athens Greece.

Acts 17:26 (NLT2)

²⁶ **From one man he [God] created all the nations throughout the whole earth.** He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.

- From one man, the Creator said we all came from Adam...every nation, every tribe, every language...we all came from Adam.
- What else did this One who was there in the beginning reveal?

Romans 5:12 (NLT2)

¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

- That's it...the answer to the two big questions from One that was actually there in the beginning.
- We all came from one man...Adam.
- Adam sinned and brought death to all that would come from his seed/lineage.
- Sin brought death and death has spread to the whole world and everyone became sinners.
- Sin was a deadly contagion, and everyone has contracted the sickness that leads to certain death.
- Is that it...is that the story of man?
- Is that all that the One who was there from the beginning of creation reveals...is there more?
- Is that it...we are born with this sin sickness, we live and we die...is that it...when you're dead, you're done...is there any hope for us mortals?
- Yes, there's more, oh yes, there's more.

Romans 5:18-19 (NLT2)

¹⁸ Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation [DEATH] for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

¹⁹ Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

- If the sin of one man brought death to all mankind, what would happen if there was another man, a second Adam, but this one never sinned...**NEVER DECEIVED**.
- If everyone on earth was from Adam...that means we all are under the curse of sin and death.
- But what if there is ONE that is not from Adam's seed...One that does NOT claim Adam as His Father...born of a different Father, different blood line altogether?
- This would change everything...If sin is the cause of death...then death could be stopped by One who does not sin....**never been deceived**.
- But is there such a man...is there a second Adam, a last Adam...One without sin...without deception?
- One from God, One whose Father is God and not from Adam...Yes, but only One...He is Christ, the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 (NLT2)

⁴⁵ The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. ⁴⁶ What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. ⁴⁷ Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. ⁴⁸ Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man.

⁴⁹ Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.

- The first man Adam was not a life-giving Spirit...he was a death giving sinner.
- But there is another Adam...a life-giving Spirit.
- Focus on that word for a moment...a life-giving Spirit...what if we could connect our lives to this Second Adam who comes from the Holy Father in Heaven?

- How is that even possible?
- How could the sin-filled descendants of Adam ever transfer into the family of the Last Adam named Jesus Christ...the Man from the Other Father, God Himself?
- We were all **born into** the seed of Adam...we would have to be **born a second time**...how is that even possible?
- Did the One from heaven tell us how?

John 3:1-9 (NLT2)

¹ There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.

² After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” ³ Jesus replied, “**I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.**” ⁴ “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵ Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ **Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.**

⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.” ⁹ “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

- How is this possible...can we really be born again...transferred from Adam’s fallen family into the family of Christ, the second Adam?
- Is there really a way to be set free from the curse of sin and death and connect our lives to this Life-Giving Spirit of Jesus Christ...and connecting us to His Father in Heaven?
- YES...there is **a way** and there is **a truth** and there is **a life** for all who will believe.
- Believe what...the Truth...what truth...*Human life can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life...eternal life.*
- **Oh, to be deceived**...what would deception look like right now...today.
- **Let’s look at some options in our search for truth...maybe it’s Darwin’s religion of evolution, Hawking’s religion of Martian’s or Bill Nye’s religion of when you’re dead your done...Oh to be deceived.**
- OR...maybe it’s a religion that looks like this...God is love and everyone goes to heaven...is that the truth?
- Oh, to be deceived.
- We are born, we live, and we die and there is nothing on the other side of the grave (when you’re dead, you’re done)...is that the truth?
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Maybe its about how good you are...being a good neighbor, a good husband/wife/father/brother/sister/friend...you recycle and serve on volunteer at the food pantry on Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Do you want the truth...only the Truth will set you free from sin and death.
- The Truth always overpowers the deception...do you want the truth?
- What if the truth is **harder than the lie**...do you still want the truth?

- What if the truth seems **unnatural and difficult** and even **without short term advantages**?
- Do you want the truth...are you sure, because here it comes:

Matthew 10:32-39 (NLT2)

³² “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ ‘I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ Your enemies will be right in your own household!’

³⁷ “If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine.

³⁸ If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.

³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will **lose it**; but if you give up your life for me, you will **find it**.

- Is that true...if you refuse to acknowledge Jesus as Lord on earth will be rejected in heaven?
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...to deny Christ now will mean your denial into the presence of the Father later?
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...Jesus came to bring a sword, not peace...His name and His truth will divide families and nations.
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...people will be your enemies if you side with Jesus, yes even inside your own family.
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...Jesus comes before you kids, before your spouse, before everything.
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...I have to take up a cross...I have to die to myself to be born again into eternal life?
- Oh, to be deceived.
- Is that true...If I cling to my life I will lose my life forever?
- Oh, to be deceived.

Closing

- *You won’t die...you can be like God, knowing both good and evil.*
 - Oh, to be deceived...God wouldn’t send anyone to hell...Oh, to be deceived.
 - I believe that if you believe you were lost, and Jesus had the power to save you...I believe you would believe in Jesus
 - Deceived... *to believe something that is not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage.*
1. Do you know where you came from...the origin of human life?
 2. Do you know why you’re here right now...the purpose and meaning of life?
 3. Do you know where you’re going...your future?
- Satan is a **deceiver**, and it was his **deception** that brought death into the kingdoms of men.

- He has been the prince of this dark world ever since, but I close today by telling his outcome, **the end of the road called deception...the place where the absence of truth will dwell forever.**
- The Bible/Truth has been revealed that one day, maybe soon the antichrist is coming to this earth. and I want you to notice the details of his coming.
- This 5-Week series is called **“While We Wait”...Session #1-don’t let me be Deceived.**

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (NLT2)

⁹ This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles.

¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil **deception** to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. ¹¹ So God will cause them to be **greatly deceived**, and they will believe these lies. ¹² Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

- There is only one way to keep from being deceived...to know the TRUTH.
- This is how it will all end...this is the truth.

Revelation 20:10 (NLT2)

¹⁰ Then the devil, who had **deceived them**, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- I tell you the TRUTH...this is the end for all the deceived....those who refuse the truth that could have saved them.
- Lord, I pray today that...**While We Wait...We cannot be Deceived!**
- Jesus’ first warning of the Olivet Discourse was this...

Matthew 24:3-8 (NIV)

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

⁴ Jesus answered: "**Watch out that no one deceives you.**

⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

NCC Roots Class #10...While We Wait---Distracted---11/6/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- We've spent the past 8-weeks on the Words of Jesus...What Did You Say!
- Now we're going to spend the final 4 sessions dealing with **The Waiting**.
- I preached a series on 5-D's back in back in 2022 and I felt convicted to use these last 4-sessions to practical teaching for the time of waiting.
- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- I pray daily that these 5 things (4 sessions) cannot happen to us in the time of waiting.
- This 4-week series is called "**While We Wait**"...we're waiting for our King and we're in a spiritual war today.
- While we wait...we need to pray that God protects us from these 5 D's.
- These 5 D's are all tools of Satan that can destroy our fellowship with God and our ability to serve our Lord Jesus...the 5 D's that you DON'T want.
- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- **This is not a method...methods are not the power of God (religious ritual without the power of God).**
- Last week we covered #1...**Deceived** and today we will talk about **Distracted**.
- **Distracted... *unable to concentrate because one's mind is preoccupied.***
- Is there a spiritual danger in being distracted...yes!
- Can distraction lead to death...yes!
- Why, because your mind and your heart are preoccupied with the wrong thing/person.

Colossians 3:2 (NLT2)

² **Think about** the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

- What if you don't...what if your **distracted** and preoccupied with the things of this world?
- Set your mind on the eternal...fix your eyes on heaven and the things that are surely coming.
- You can't do either if you're **distracted** and preoccupied with stuff and now.
- Did you know that "**Worry**" is a **distraction**...to spend time worrying is a distraction and a preoccupation with something that you can't really fix anyway.
- Let's start there...with Worry...it's a terrible distraction because it takes your eyes off of the eternal and forces you to dwell in the temporary.
- Jesus warns us about this **distraction of worry**...are any of you worried about what I'm going to say about this particular distraction...is anyone worried yet?
- Jesus brings this issue up twice in Luke chapter 11.
- The first one...Jesus tells us not to be distracted with the opposition or the suffering that will come to those who follow Christ.
- I say this today because I believe opposition and suffering lie ahead for the true church of Jesus.

Luke 12:11-12 (NLT2)

¹¹ "And when you are brought to trial in the synagogues and before rulers and authorities, **don't worry**

about how to defend yourself or what to say,¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said.”

- Let me put it this way...many people never live their faith out loud with boldness because they are distracted by the worry that opposition will come, and you won't know how to defend yourself.
- You don't have to defend yourself...you belong to God...He is our defender.
- This is the **deadly distraction**...it is a preoccupation with self, and it takes your eyes off of Jesus and the eternal.
- You can't focus when you worry, in fact worry becomes your focus.
- That thing just keeps going around and around in your mind and it takes all your energy and power away...taking your eyes and trust off of the real power...Jesus.
- Remember, we are told to think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth...**don't get distracted.**
- But what if they put me on trial for thinking and talking about the things of heaven...don't worry about how to defend yourself...God is our defender...don't get distracted and take your mind off the eternal.
- After all...what can they do to you....really...I wonder how many of you actually believe this?

Matthew 10:28 (NLT2)

²⁸ “**Don't be afraid** of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- When you get **distracted**, you take your eyes off the One that has the real power and authority and you put your eyes on something else...someone else (spirit war-two spirits).
- Even if they kill you...you have the resurrection, and it cures death 100% of the time.
- You wouldn't know that if you're **distracted**...preoccupied with fear and doubt, would you?
- Worry is a terrible distraction and it denies the power of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in your present situation.
- You might tell me and some of you have...I try to stop worrying, but I just can't...why?
- **Because you're distracted**...you're preoccupied with the event and not focused on the power of God to overcome anything and everything...you're distracted.
- Jesus takes this distraction called worry even further.
- Is anyone worried about what I'm about to say next or even worse...tell you what Jesus says about worry?
- I say that because some of you worry so much you've become proud of it...it defines you.

Luke 12:22-26 (NLT2)

²² Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! ²⁵ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁶ And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?

- Does your worrying work...is it changing anything or is it just keeping you DISTRACTED?
- Satan uses worry as a distraction...to keep you from setting your mind on God and His perfection, goodness and faithfulness.
- Worrying doesn't accomplish anything...it only takes away from your life.
- Worrying is like looking at God and saying....I know you're God, but I don't think you can or will handle this one.
- I know you're God, but I don't believe you really love me enough to take care of this.
- And what does taking care of this really mean...what is the worst thing that could happen...happens (death)?

Psalm 23:4-6 (NIV)

⁴ **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;** your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ **Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

- Why...how...goodness and mercy and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever...Because the Lord is **MY** Shepherd!
- Are you distracted by worry....do you know who is distracted by worry...pagans!
- Why, because **the Lord isn't their shepherd**...they have every reason to worry, but not you!
- Unless you're a pagan...then I can tell you today...go ahead and worry because goodness of mercy doesn't belong to you and you will not dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Luke 12:29-32 (NLT2)

²⁹ “And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things.

³⁰ **These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world,** but your Father already knows your needs. ³¹ **Seek the Kingdom of God above all else,** and he will give you everything you need. ³² “So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

- Fear and worry are distractions and they are enemies of faith.
- Faith is to be sure and certain...worry and fear is to unsure and uncertain.
- Pagans worry and pagans should worry because they live distracted and preoccupied by the world, but that can't be us.
- The Holy Spirit lives in us and we have come to the truth...**For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom** (the King lives inside your now).
- But there is **one more distraction**...beyond worry, doubt and fear.
- Does anyone want to guess what this one is?
- Some of you non-worriers were hoping I would be distracted and not hit this one.
- **Distracted by the busyness of life**...this is the one that I battle with.
- Preoccupied by the things and tasks around you so that you never set your minds on heaven and the One enthroned in heaven.
- You don't have time...you're too busy!

Luke 10:38-40 (NLT2)

³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home.

³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

⁴⁰ But **Martha was distracted** by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

- Martha was distracted...Martha had a lot to do (food, dishes, housecleaning).
- Martha was busy...she wasn't out partying or participating in sin...she was just busy...Martha was distracted.
- The Son of God was in her house and she was too busy to understand what that means.
- Do you remember the definition... **Distracted... unable to concentrate because one's mind is preoccupied.**
- The Son of God, the Creator of the universe is in her house and she is distracted...how is that possible?
- The same way worry, fear and doubt are possible...it's called distracted...**making you unable to focus on the important because you're too busy with the urgent.**
- **Distracted is when the urgent takes precedent over the important.**
- So, so busy...so many responsibilities and so many things need to be done.
- Now, I need to come clean here on this one.
- I'm not a worrier, but I do struggle with this busy thing...too many things to do tempting me to distraction.
- I've labeled it The Vortex...it sucks you into it and takes you away from the important.
- Let me give you an example....you are in a very important conversation with a very important person and your phone rings...what do you do?
- You feel compelled to answer that phone (THE URGENT) only to find out that you've won another trip to Hawaii or your car warranty (on your 15-year-old car) is about to expire.
- Let me ask all of you a few questions.
- **Do you have time to pray or are you too busy?**
- Jesus was in the kitchen waiting for Martha to come in and talk to him.
- **Are you too busy to study the Bible...**The Holy Spirit is waiting to reveal the person of Christ to you if you will turn off the urgent long enough to take hold of the important.
- **Are you too busy to come to church on Sunday, every Sunday?**
- Maybe you don't think you need church this week, but what if someone at church needs you.
- **Are you that busy...are you that distracted?**
- I confess that sometimes I have to force myself to STOP...JUST STOP!
- Turn off the urgent and **take hold** of the important.
- The Bible is the Word of God, and He wants me to come listen to Him.
- I must make time to pray...that's when He fills me up with the unexplainable and the eternal (10 P's)

- I must take time to come to church because the elders said they were going to stop paying me if I didn't show up.
- Jesus was in the house and Martha was distracted.
- Is anyone here distracted today...that's how Satan does it.
- In Satan's world...the urgent takes precedent over the important.
- The **temporary** takes the place of the **eternal** and then you die...and eternity comes.
- Jesus was in the house and Martha was distracted...she wasn't just **distracted**, she was angry and filled with worry...angry with the one that was doing the right thing.
- Tell my sister to get in here and help me.
- I picture Mary sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to Him tell stories...glorious good news.
- Finally, Jesus has had enough of the urgent and He reveals the important.

Luke 10:41-42 (NLT2)

⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "**My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!**

⁴² There is **only one thing worth being concerned about.** Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

- My dear Martha, my very worried, distracted, upset and angry Martha.
- There is only ONE THING that is really important in the house today and it's not lunch.
- Mary has found the important and it will not be taken from her.
- Let me ask you something right now...this past 6 months of your life.
- Are you more like a Mary or a Martha?
- Yes, you need to work and provide for your family.
- Yes, we live in an "eat, drink and wear" world.
- We want you all to eat, drink and wear clothes.
- But this can't be the meaning of your life...that's what the pagans run after, but not us.
- We are the blood bought children of the Most-High God.
- We **used to** follow after those things, but no more.
- We found the MOST IMPORTANT...JESUS.
- Now we have set our eyes on the eternal, not the urgent or the temporary.
- Now, we have fixed our minds and our hearts on that which is coming.
- The Word of God changed us...the Holy Spirit has changed us...knowing Jesus changed us.
- We are no longer deceived because we know the truth...Truth is a person.
- We are no longer distracted because we know the important.

Colossians 3:1-7 (NLT2)

¹ Since you have been raised to **new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven**, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.

² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

³ For you died to this life, and **your real life is hidden with Christ in God.**

⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater,

worshipping the things of this world.

⁶ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

⁷ **You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.**

Closing

- I'm not going to act like any of this is easy today, it's not easy.
- To believe is not easy, in fact it is un-natural.
- But dying is also natural...it is our nature to die.
- It is our nature to worry, doubt and fear.
- It is our nature to be distracted and deceived...to live outside the Truth.
- But there is One that came to set us free from that nature that leads us into sin and death.
- There is One that has come to set us free...**so that we could not be deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged or disheartened.**
- By His power, by the power of Jesus Christ we will survive this wilderness and we will enjoy the Promised Land one day.
- Yes, even in the valley of the shadow of death...Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- One more promise of God to finish us out today.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT2)

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

¹⁸ So we **don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.**

- While We Wait...don't look at the troubles.

NCC Roots Class #11...While We Wait---Dissuaded---11/13/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- I pray daily that these 5 things (4 sessions) cannot happen to us in the time of waiting.
- This 4-week series is called "**While We Wait**"...we're waiting for our King and we're in a spiritual war today.
- While we wait...we need to pray that God protects us from these 5 D's.
- These 5 D's are all tools of Satan that can destroy our fellowship with God and our ability to serve our Lord Jesus...the 5 D's that you DON'T want.
- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- **This is not a method...methods are not the power of God (religious ritual without the power of God).**
- We've covered #1 and #2...**Deceived** and **Distracted**.
- Today we hit **#3...Dissuaded...to persuade someone NOT to take a particular course of action**.
- Example of this word is this...

Acts 21:12-14 (NIV)

¹² When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³ Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

¹⁴ When he would not be **dissuaded**, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

- Is this one dangerous...like **deceived and distracted**?
- Let me answer that question with a question.
- Has there ever been a time which someone tried to dissuade/persuade you to not do something that you knew you were supposed to do?
- Either a **dissuading** person on the outside or a **dissuading** voice on the inside...have you ever had that happen?
- Let me make it even more simple...has someone or something ever convinced you to not do something that you knew you were supposed to do?
- Dissuaded is to NOT do something...to NOT do something that you were called by God to do.
- Can you see the danger now?
- That first "D" **deceived** is pretty simple...God said don't and you did...it's called sin.
- That second "D" **distracted** is just being so consumed with life that you miss the main point.
- But this third "D" is about **NOT**...not doing the thing that God has called you to do.
- Most people realize that life is filled with "Do's & Don'ts"...that's how most people see religion.
- We usually associate sin with the "Don'ts".
- Let's use the 10 Commandments as an example.
- #1-**Do not** put any other god before me.
- #2-**Do not** make an idol to worship in place of me.
- #3-**Do not** misuse my Holy Name.

- That's the first three and notice they are all "Don'ts".
- But notice the next two:
- #4-Remember (keep) the Sabbath and keep it holy...that's a "DO", not a "Don't".
- #5-Honor your mother and father...that's a "DO" also.
- #6-**Do not** murder.
- #7-**Do not** commit adultery.
- #8-**Do not** steal.
- #9-**Do not** give a false testimony.
- #10-**Do not** covet your neighbors' stuff.
- There are 8 don'ts and 2 do's.
- Most of the time we (the church) focus on the sins of commission...the Don'ts, but there is another dangerous sin against God.
- There are sins of omission...**the Do's that we never did**...they are just as dangerous and deadly as the Don'ts.
- Let's begin our study of this dangerous word (dissuaded) in the Old Testament.
- I begin in the Old Testament, but I tell you that Jesus will bring this one up again in the New Testament.
- The man's name was Naaman and he **was a Gentile**, and the commander of the army of Aram.
- Naaman was powerful and respected military general, but Naaman had one big problem-leprosy.
- This is where the story gets interesting and providential...Naaman's wife had a servant girl that was Jewish.
- This Jewish girl was actually a slave that was captured during one of those military campaigns against Israel.

2 Kings 5:3 (NLT2)

³ One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. **He would heal him of his leprosy.**"

- Can you see God's providence yet...God is in this story.
- Naaman wants to be healed of this terrible disease...so he gets approval from his king to go to the King of Israel and seek out this prophet that lives in Samaria.
- The King of Israel thinks it's a trick and becomes very upset until the Prophet Elisha comes to calm him down...**send Naaman to me**...and the King of Israel does.

2 Kings 5:9-10 (NLT2)

⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house.

¹⁰ But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "**Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy.**"

- Remember, Naaman is a powerful and influential military general and Elisha doesn't even come to the door.
- Here comes our first lesson today regarding the word "**dissuaded**"...can you be dissuaded by your own pride?

- Can your own pride persuade you to NOT do what God has called you to do?
- Naaman (a gentile) has traveled all the way to Samaria and Naaman has found the Jewish prophet that his Jewish servant girl told him about.
- This Jewish prophet, Elisha has even given the prescription that would totally cure his leprosy...but.

2 Kings 5:11-12 (NLT2)

¹¹ But Naaman became angry and stalked away. “I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!” he said. “I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! ¹² Aren’t the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn’t I wash in them and be healed?” **So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.**

- There is something inside of Naaman that is **dissuading** him from hearing and receiving the healing of God.
- Healing is right in front of Naaman, but pride (that inner voice of self) has **dissuaded Naaman** from taking hold of God’s healing.
- Naaman’s pride said “DON’T”...**that’s what dissuaded does**...it says “DON’T do it.
- Don’t do it, don’t believe it, don’t receive it.
- The Bible says that it was pride that caused the fall of Satan...this pride thing is deadly.

Ezekiel 28:13-17 (NLT2)

¹³ **You were in Eden, the garden of God.** Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone— red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald— all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. ¹⁴ **I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian.** You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire. ¹⁵ “You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created **until the day evil was found in you.** ¹⁶ Your rich commerce led you to violence, and you sinned. So I banished you in disgrace from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. ¹⁷ **Your heart was filled with pride** because of all your beauty. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings.

- Do you think this “dissuaded” thing, this pride thing has any impact on us today?
- This series is called “**While We Wait**” we are waiting for our King and until then we are all weary travelers on our way to the Promised Land...like the picture of Israel in the wilderness.
- God warned the Children of Israel about this **deadly pride** that **dissuades** the heart of man from fully obeying and following God’s voice.
- As I read this interaction between God and Israel from some 1500 before Christ...see if you can see the American story inside it.
- 40 years of Weary Wandering in the desert...weary travelers in the wilderness waiting for their deliverer to escort them into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 8:4-10 (NLT2)

⁴ For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell.

⁵ Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you for your own good. ⁶ "So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him.

⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. ⁸ It is a land of wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of olive oil and honey. ⁹ It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills.

¹⁰ When you have eaten your fill, **be sure to praise the LORD your God** for the good land he has given you.

- Then God gives them a warning...This was God's warning to Israel after they found peace in the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 8:11-14 (NLT2)

¹¹ **"But that is the time to be careful!** Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. ¹² For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, ¹³ and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, **be careful!**

¹⁴ **Do not become proud** at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt.

- This is God's warning to America today...do not become proud in your time of plenty.
- Pride declares "self-sufficiency" and there is no such thing...we will die without God.
- Dependence upon self is prideful and deadly....to be **dissuaded** from depending upon God.
- Now, back to Naaman's story...God's mercy and God's providence is still in this Naaman story and God puts truth inside the hearts of Naaman's military officers.

2 Kings 5:13 (NLT2)

¹³ But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So **you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'**"

- Those are some very wise officers.
- It all looked too simple to Naaman...the cure didn't seem to fit the size of the sickness...too simple.
- I must stop right now and connect our stories to Naaman's.
- Does the cure to our sickness (sin)...a sickness that surely leads to death and eternal separation from God...sound too simple to be true to you?
- Could the cure to death be as simple as **believing and receiving the Word of God** by faith?
- Can human pride **dissuade** a dying man from taking a drink of living water?
- Can human pride **dissuade** a dying man from taking possession of eternal life?
- If you heard a Word from God that told you to go and offer a lamb sacrifice on Mount Ranier in Washington state would that seem more appropriate than a childlike believing faith?
- Or what if the Son of God said this?

Mark 16:15-16 (NLT2)

¹⁵ And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.

¹⁶ Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

- There’s a DO for us all today...go into all the world and do for them what Elisha is doing for Naaman.
- Tell them about God’s plan to save them, not from leprosy, but from death itself.
- Would you believe Elisha...would you believe Jesus?
- What would dissuade you...what would dissuade Naaman?
- **Dissuaded...to persuade someone NOT to take a particular course of action.**
- There must have been all kinds of voices inside Naaman’s head that day (do’s and don’ts).
- There are all kinds of voices inside our heads every day...do’s and don’ts.
- I heard David Reagan say something like this a few years ago...All the religions of the world have do’s and don’t, but only Christianity says “done”...IT IS FINISHED.
- Do you believe it, do you believe Him...what would dissuade you from believing this?
- Let’s see which voice Naaman listens to (pride **or** Elisha):

2 Kings 5:14 (NLT2)

¹⁴ So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child’s, and he was healed!

- I sat in my chair that day (when I wrote this) and my skin tingled, and tears welled up in my eyes as I read that verse.
- How simple and how reachable...God has made our healing so simple and so near.
- I’m not trying to oversimplify the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I’m not even telling you that it’s easy to come to Christ.
- I think it’s quite hard to come to Christ...do you know why...because it’s un-natural.
- Pride is natural...**our pride is a dangerous dissuader.**
- Pride keeps the focus on you, but healing comes when we focus on God/His Word.
- Where does this dissuading pride come from anyway...do you know how dangerous it is?

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

- It’s all passing away and you’re passing away...we have a form of terminal leprosy that surely leads to death and eternal separation from God.
- That’s why it’s called Good News.
- Let’s go back to Naaman coming out of the water at the Jordan River.

2 Kings 5:15 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, “**Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel.**” So please accept a gift from your servant.”

- Now I know...that would have never happened if Naaman had allowed his pride to **dissuade him** from following the Word of God through Elisha.
- Now I know...Naaman knows God because Naaman experienced God how...by doing.
- I told you there were do's and don'ts and Naaman experienced God through the DO.
- Naaman is so overwhelmed with thanksgiving that he wants to shower Elisha with gifts.
- Naaman has with him... 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing.
- Elisha won't accept it...none of it.
- Naaman then asks Elisha for something that moves my soul.

2 Kings 5:16-19 (NLT2)

¹⁶ But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts.” And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused. ¹⁷ Then Naaman said, “All right, but **please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD.**” ¹⁸ However, may the LORD pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too.” ¹⁹ “Go in peace,” Elisha said. So Naaman started home again.

- God has purified Naaman's heart in that Jordan river, not just his skin.
- No other Gods...forgive me if my job puts me in a compromising place in the future.

Closing

- Do you remember that I told you Jesus talks about this story in the Old Testament?

Luke 4:27 (NLT2)

²⁷ And there were **many lepers** in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.”

- Naaman was a Gentile...Naaman is you!
- You and I were born with a terrible sickness called sin and it leads to certain death.
- Do you want to be healed, set free from the power of sin and death?
- Do you want to receive the promise of God of the resurrection and totally new/pure human flesh?
- **God wash and be cured!**
- If God asked you for something big today...would you believe Him?
- **Go wash and be cured!**
- Today, you have encountered God through His Word...it's that simple and it's that wonderful.
- Today, you are one of these two guys in God's story...**Elisha or Naaman.**

- Naaman before and after...like two different people...which one are you?
- But after Naaman believed...he became an Elisha...sharing the good news with others.
- God offers the cure to death itself, through the atoning sacrifice of His Son-Jesus.
- Who would turn this down?
- **Dissuaded...to persuade someone NOT to take a particular course of action.**
- What could possibly dissuade you from believing and receiving this eternal healing?
- Pride is a powerful force that dissuades and destroys.
- Pride will keep you out of the Promised Land.
- Pride will keep you out of the family of God.
- Naaman was a Gentile and God opened up a door for a Gentile to become a child of God.
- God is still doing that today...the door to the Gentiles is still open today.
- Pride is a life of self. and you can't save yourself any more than Naaman could heal himself.

Acts 21:12-14 (NIV)

¹² When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³ Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

¹⁴ **When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."**

- **Count the cost...The Lord's will be done!**
- I pray today that we could not be deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged or disheartened.

NCC Roots Class #12...While We Wait-Discouraged & Disheartened 11/20/24

Led by Terry Cooper

- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- I pray daily that these 5 things (4 sessions) cannot happen to us in the time of waiting.
- This 4-week series is called “**While We Wait**”...we’re waiting for our King and we’re in a spiritual war today.
- While we wait...we need to pray that God protects us from these 5 D’s.
- These 5 D’s are all tools of Satan that can destroy our fellowship with God and our ability to serve our Lord Jesus...the 5 D’s that you DON’T want.
- I pray I cannot be **Deceived, Distracted, Dissuaded, Discouraged or Disheartened**.
- **This is not a method...methods are not the power of God (religious ritual without the power of God).**
- **#1...Deceived...to believe something that’s not true, typically in order to gain some personal advantage.**
- **#2...Distracted... unable to concentrate because one's mind is preoccupied.**
- **#3...Dissuaded...to persuade someone NOT to take a particular course of action.**
- **#4...Discouraged...to lose your courage, confidence and enthusiasm**
- Have you ever lost your courage and become afraid?
- Maybe that’s you right now, if you were honest.
- How is your courage...have you unconsciously become fearful?
- You weren’t always fearful...something happened.
- You haven’t always been unsure or uncertain, but something happened.
- You became **discouraged**...I’ve watched it happen to a lot of people over the years.
- It usually starts small, but not always...maybe it was a series of small events or one large thing, but you’ve become **discouraged**.
- Your enthusiasm is gone, and you probably didn’t even notice that it left.
- I fight it too...that’s why I pray every day against it (5 D’s).
- It’s almost impossible to carry out God’s calling your life if you’re discouraged...you’ve lost your courage and become fearful.
- One of the main purposes of our weekly church assembly at church is to “**Encourage**” so that you won’t be **discouraged**...Encouragement is the best medicine for discouragement.
- We gather together and pour encouragement into each other understanding that the world we live in is definitely discouraging.
- Let’s be honest, sometimes it looks like we’re losing.
- Sometimes our circumstances are frightening and unsure.
- I am convinced after years of Bible study and in my own personal life that **fear is the enemy of faith**.
- And faith is the foundation of everything in our walk with Christ.
- Faith to be **sure and certain** of what we hope for.
- Faith is to be **confident and sure** of the promises of God revealed through the Holy Scriptures.

Hebrews 11:1-2 (NLT2)

¹ Faith is the **confidence** that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us **assurance** about things we cannot see. ² Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.

- Faith is not optional equipment or a gift to the spiritually elite.
- Faith is crucial and faith saves your life/soul.
- Do you think there is a direct connection between **faith and courage**?

Hebrews 11:5-6 (NLT2)

⁵ It was **by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying**—“he disappeared, because God took him.” For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God.

⁶ And **it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.**

- Let me begin today with this bit of encouragement...as of right now, it is still possible that we will be modern day Enoch's.
- Enoch was taken off the earth before the judgment (flood)...we could be modern day Enoch's.
- Would you assume that Enoch lived a life of **courage or fear** as the time of God's judgment came near?
- Enoch had faith...it's obvious that the world in the time of Enoch had turned their backs on God, just like today.
- But it's also obvious that Enoch did not let **the apostasy** all around him to become discouraged so that he was fearful, paralyzed and unfruitful.
- No, Enoch pleased God in the midst of the **discouraging world** around him...how...faith!
- Faith is the only way to please God, then and now.
- Yes, there are discouraging things going on all around us even now, but we must live by faith...Lord, Please do not let me become discouraged!
- We must believe NOT ONLY that God exists, but that He rewards those who earnestly, sincerely seek Him.
- And how do we seek Him...How did Enoch seek Him?

Genesis 5:23-24 (NLT2)

²³ Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴ **walking in close fellowship with God.** Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

- Enoch walked in fellowship with God, by faith and one day he just disappeared...God took him.
- I say it again, especially to some of you who are feeling very discouraged in this life of following Christ and living under the authority of God's Word.
- As of right now, there is still a chance that we could be modern day Enoch's.
- And the BIG question of faith is this...do you really believe that...I do!
- Jesus will be coming specifically to get those who actually-really believe that.
- Enoch escaped the flood, the judgment of God...that was Enoch's reward.

- The Bible says **the church will escape** the judgment of God...those who walk by faith in fellowship with God.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NLT2)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

¹⁸ So **encourage** each other with these words.

- Encourage is the cure for discourage...did it work for you?
- It will if you believe it...it's called faith...as of right now, we could still be Enoch's.
- But what if the Lord delays...actually those believers who have already died and were buried will actually rise first, ahead of us who are still alive like Enoch's.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 (NLT2)

¹³ And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know **what will happen to the believers who have died** so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, **God will bring back with him the believers who have died.** ¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died.

- Do you actually believe first Thessalonians is a Word from God to us through the Apostle Paul...I do!
- It's called faith...we have encountered a Word from God and we believe it and received that Word by faith.
- That Word is encouraging, and **that Word overpowers my discouragement**...so that I am not discouraged and fearful...losing my confidence and enthusiasm.
- You can't lose...are you listening...you can't lose...**dead or alive** you can't lose if you have faith in Christ and **refuse to become discouraged**...fear is the enemy of faith...fear is the absence of courage.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (NLT2)

⁹ For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.

¹⁰ Christ died for us so that, **whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.** ¹¹ So **encourage each other** and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

- There it is again...encourage each other with that Word...did it work?
- That Word only encouraged people who believe it...it's called faith and I believe it.
- While We Wait...Don't let me become discouraged.
- So what do we do as we await the coming of our Lord, our King.
- We do what Enoch did...**we walk in fellowship with God.**
- Today, we walk in fellowship with God by believing and receiving the promises of God through the Son of God-Jesus.
- Fellowship with God today is to receive the Holy Spirit...Christ in me.

- Paul writes the following to Timothy and to the church...past and present.

2 Timothy 1:5-8 (NLT2)

⁵ I remember your **genuine faith**, for you **share the faith** that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that **same faith** continues strong in you. ⁶ This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. ⁷ For **God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.** ⁸ So **never be ashamed** to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. **With the strength God gives you**, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News.

- Do you realize that the Apostle Paul wrote that from a Roman prison cell?
- Faith, faith, faith...genuine faith...share the faith...Enoch type of faith...fan the flames of your faith into a powerful flame.
- The Holy Spirit **does not bring fear or discouragement** (timidity) into your life.
- If you're battling fear and discouragement...it's not coming from God...where do you think it's coming from (the unholy spirit)?
- The Holy Spirit brings Power, Love and Self Discipline...the opposite of discouragement.
- Paul has every reason to be **discouraged** because he's in prison awaiting death.
- But Paul knows something big...Paul knows about the resurrection of the dead.
- Yes, Paul's circumstances are rotten, but the resurrection is bigger than his rotten circumstances.
- Paul places his discouraging and dark circumstances in front of the light of Truth and the Light of Truth removes his fear and doubts.

#5...Disheartened...*having lost your determination and become dispirited.*

- It is to become downhearted, depressed...it is **to LOSE YOUR HEART.**
- It's what happens after you lose your courage (#4 discouraged).
- It's the end of the road and it's a very dark place...to be disheartened.
- Your heart has been drawn away from God...did you notice that it's a step-by-step departure?
- It starts with "**deceived**" and moves to "**distracted**" and then you become "**dissuaded**", which leads to the loss of your courage "**discouraged**"...all of it ends in "**disheartened**"...you lose your heart.
- **While We Wait**...We are in a spiritual war like never before...the war for the heart and soul of man.
- When God used Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt...God tried to prepare the people for war (spiritual and physical war) as they made their way toward the Promised Land.
- There would be many battles on the way to the Promised Land (same today).

Deuteronomy 20:1-4 (NIV)

¹ When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with

you.² When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army.

³ He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be **fainthearted or afraid**; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. ⁴ For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

- Now, if you really believed that...you would never be defeated...it's called faith.
- Then, God gives this **very unusual instruction** to the people....

Deuteronomy 20:8 (NIV)

⁸ Then the officers shall add, "Is any man **afraid** or **fainthearted**? Let him go home **so that his brothers will not become disheartened too.**"

- Did you know that being afraid (lost your courage-discouraged) and disheartened is contagious?
- Fear is a cancer that can draw **your heart** away from God.
- Fear is the enemy of faith, and the lack of faith is deadly.
- Is anyone here **discouraged (afraid)** today...is anyone here **disheartened** today?
- A **divided heart** (dis-heartened) is actually called idolatry...do you realize that?
- Do you know how dangerous this condition is?
- God revealed this danger to the people through Moses.
- God also revealed this danger (to become discouraged, afraid and disheartened) to **lose heart** to the Apostle Paul.

Romans 10:5-13 (NLT2)

⁵ For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. ⁶ But **faith's way** of getting right with God says, "Don't say **in your heart**, 'Who will go up to heaven' (to bring Christ down to earth). ⁷ And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead' (to bring Christ back to life again)." ⁸ In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and **in your heart**." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: ⁹ If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing **in your heart** that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. ¹¹ As the Scriptures tell us, "**Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.**" ¹² Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³ For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

- While We Wait...There is a spiritual war raging then and now for the heart of man.
- To whom does your heart belong...right now...today?
- What do you believe **in your heart** today...do you believe death has no power over you because of the resurrection?
- God wants us to love Him with **all our heart**.
- But Satan wants to take your heart away from God (to be disheartened) and he uses these 5 steps to do it...they begin with deceived.
- Let me give you an example.

- In the early church the people were selling properties and bringing the money to the Apostles to use to expand the gospel.
- Why, because they believed in their hearts that **nothing else really mattered anymore** because of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead.
- The gospel is spreading like wildfire and many people are **giving their hearts fully** to the Lord.
- Then Satan enters the story...and how did he enter this story of people giving **their hearts** to God?

Acts 5:1-3 (NLT2)

¹ But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property.

² He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest. ³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, **why have you let Satan fill your heart**? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself.

- There are so many things that draw your heart away from God.
- Fear, doubt, money, power, pleasure, deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged and disheartened.
- I keep going back to God's instructions to Israel as they start out toward the Promised Land.
- Yes, the wilderness will have many battles (physical and spiritual), just like today.
- But God has promised to go with us and fight for us if we would keep Him in the right place, **the center of our heart** (all your heart, soul, mind and strength).
- In the time of Moses, the journey started with a pillar of cloud and fire, but what about now.
- The Holy Spirit belongs to those who have fully **given their hearts** to God, through faith.
- **Christ in me** (in my heart)...think about it...I will go with you into this wilderness battle.
- Do you trust God in your present wilderness journey...**While We Wait**?
- Do you trust his provision (food, clothing, shelter, protection, will He keep His promises)?
- This is what Jesus said...do you believe Him, and do you believe this right now?

Luke 12:32-34 (NLT2)

³² "So **don't be afraid**, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

³³ "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ **Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart** will also be.

- Find your treasure and you'll find your heart.
- Satan is real and he is attacking us **while we wait**...do not be deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged or disheartened.
- Look and see what your life is pursuing, and you will find the destination and destiny of your heart.
- This is my conclusion to this issue.
- The church has become **discouraged and disheartened** because the church has become worldly.
- We were supposed to be the ones who spent our lives storing up treasures in heaven, but we got deceived, distracted and dissuaded...got too comfortable down here.

- The first century church was getting rid of everything that hindered the Holy Spirit's **mission in their hearts**...nothing else really mattered anymore.
- These 5-D's are deadly tools of Satan...He is very good at his game of deceit.
- God gives us a warning about this deadly **deception** of Satan.
- God warns us about becoming **disheartened**...to allow **your heart** to be turned away from Him.
- Today, the Holy Spirit cries out a warning about the danger of becoming disheartened.
- A divided heart with divided loyalty...**halfway in the world and half way in Christ**.
- The Holy Spirit in the New Testament uses Moses' wilderness journey to illustrate the spiritual battle in the church age, just like I did in the beginning today.

Hebrews 3:7-12 (NLT2)

⁷ That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear his voice, ⁸ **don't harden your hearts** as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness. ⁹ There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years. ¹⁰ So I was angry with them, and I said, '**Their hearts always turn away from me**. They refuse to do what I tell them.'

¹¹ So in my anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter my place of rest.'" ¹² Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. **Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.**

- How...how can I make sure that my heart doesn't turn away from the Living God, becoming disheartened?
- How...how can I keep from being deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged and disheartened?
- How...you must remain in fellowship with Christ...living and walking by faith in Christ.
- Let me put it another way, if the Holy Spirit reigns in your heart...you will not become disheartened or drawn away.
- But how do we specifically do that...let's ask the one that Jesus loved that question...John.

1 John 2:24-29 (NLT2)

²⁴ So you must **remain faithful** to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, **you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father.** ²⁵ And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us. ²⁶ I am writing these things **to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.** ²⁷ But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, **remain in fellowship with Christ.** ²⁸ And now, dear children, **remain in fellowship with Christ** so that when he returns, **you will be full of courage** and not shrink back from him in shame. ²⁹ Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all who do what is right are God's children.

- You must remain faithful and keep your laser focus in this wilderness journey...**while we wait**.
- Remain in fellowship with Christ and **you will be full of courage**...do you see it.
- You must hold onto the Truth of God's Word/Promises in this wilderness journey...while we wait.
- If you do...you will remain in fellowship with the Son, and with the Father.
- But what if you don't...do you see the danger?

1 John 2:26 (NLT2)

²⁶ I am writing these things **to warn you** about those who want to lead you astray.

- Do you see the danger...Deceived, distracted, dissuaded, discouraged and disheartened.
- The Apostle John was full of the Holy Spirit and he has revealed the way to remain in fellowship with Christ and have victory over Satan.
- In fact, these are the final two verses from John's first letter.

1 John 3:23-24 (NLT2)

²³ And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments **remain in fellowship with him, and he with them.** And we know he lives in us because **the Spirit he gave us lives in us.**

- And what if you don't...you will become disheartened...you will lose your heart to another.

Summary

- There you go...the 5-D's...that God gave me while was in prayer.
- The Holy Spirit has used this Old Testament Scripture to keep me from becoming **discouraged or disheartened** when people hear the Word and still turn their hearts away from God.

Ezekiel 2:1-5 (NLT2)

¹ "Stand up, son of man," said the voice. "I want to speak with you." ² The Spirit came into me as he spoke, and he set me on my feet. I listened carefully to his words. ³ "Son of man," he said, "I am sending you to the nation of Israel, a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. They and their ancestors have been rebelling against me to this very day. ⁴ **They are a stubborn and hard-hearted people.** But I am sending you to say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says!' ⁵ And whether they listen or refuse to listen—for remember, they are rebels—**at least they will know they have had a prophet among them.**

Closing

- I don't claim to be a prophet of God, but I do proclaim today that God has called me as a Watchman to warn people **#5...Disheartened...having lost your determination and become dispirited.**
- It is to become downhearted, depressed...it is **to LOSE YOUR HEART.**
- It's what happens after you lose your courage (#4 discouraged).
- It's the end of the road and it's a very dark place...to be disheartened.
- Your heart has been drawn away from God...did you notice that it's a step-by-step departure?
- It starts with "**deceived**" and moves to "**distracted**" and then you become "**dissuaded**", which leads to the loss of your courage "**discouraged**...all of it ends in "**disheartened**"...you lose your heart.
- **While We Wait**...We are in a spiritual war like never before...the war for the heart and soul of man.