

ON LIFE

Blog Posts 2014-20

Peter Walker

***'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror;
then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.'***

(1 Corinthians 13:12)

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Introduction

‘... encouraging one another, all the more as you see the Day approaching.’ (Hebrews 10:25)

We need to encourage one another. We need to lift our eyes to the Lord of hope. We need daily reminders of God’s good report, our very bright future in him. Here is another, beautiful verse:

‘The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, ever-brighter until the full light of day!’

(Proverbs 4:18)

This booklet is a collection of 176 blog posts, published on my website, 2014 – 2020.

One key reason I put this ‘collection’ together is so that people can not only read the posts personally and be encouraged, but also **share** them with others. Here’s how you can share the content of this booklet:

You can share this whole booklet as a free PDF, by downloading it from my website, or simply referring a friend to the website directly: www.1peter1three.weebly.com

You can also share specific blog posts, by sending a friend or group the URL or link. I have included the web address at the end of *each* blog post, together with a specific QR code. You can scan the QR code with your phone camera, and it will take you directly to the ‘online post’ – which you can then message to a friend, or upload on social media.

The hard copy of this booklet is also available on Amazon. Simply search the title and author. (*On Life, Peter Walker*)

One other key thing to note is that these blog posts are best read with a Bible to hand. There are lots of Bible verses ‘referenced’ throughout the blog posts. If you take some extra time after you’ve read a blog post, to go back and look up some of the verses, you will not regret it!

‘He will seek me and he will find me, when he seeks me with all his heart!’ (Jeremiah 29:13)

IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES (PS 23:4)

David writes, **'you lay a table before me in the presence of my enemies.'** (Psalm 23:4)

I memorized Psalm 23 when I was maybe 6 years old? It was the NAS version, quite King-Jamesy. Tonight after rolling out the trash can and asking myself what is it all for... I recalled this one line:

'...a table before me' (provision, reassurance),

'... in the presence of my enemies.' (surrounded by danger?)

This is, in fact, a picture of peace, but with danger and darkness pressing in, on the very fringes of that peace, maybe dark mists moving in and out of the rays of light. Close. Very close. And yet... as the Psalmist writes in 91:7,

'Though ten thousand fall at your right hand, it will not come near you.'

At my right hand - that sounds quite 'near', and yet it is 'not near'! How so close, and yet not near? God's peace is different, for sure! (John 14:27)

Ok, to bed now, have work in the morning!

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/in-the-presence-of-my-enemies-psalm-234>



CHILD IN YOU HEAVEN

The restrictions on title length (and tweets) are making me a truncated shot. I love that rules of grammar are mere consensus. What is 'word', therefore? Voice, tone, expression? Tears? Song?

I was thinking on the tragic glance of a teen. A smile through tears with sun snapping rays criss-cross across face and street. Kids bring the pure to the fore, till it discovers its own right to hate. But there is a zone - a short zone - where a child stands pure where darkness has betrayed her.

Yes, she still smiles and loves her Hater. That moment right there is Christ. And it is here that Jesus speaks to the child in you and me:

'...I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
(Matthew 18:3)

Jesus, the pure of pure, walked against the rush and essence and quintessence of darkness, with love. Here he broke the very sting of death (1 Cor 15:55), and crushed hell.

I think the smile of the hurt child - in you still - is the brightest light and reflector of the crucifixion. Jesus, hold us now.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/child-in-you-heaven>



AMERICAN DREAM? PROSPERITY DOCTRINE?

The American Dream is tanked with positivity and bravado, pregnant with pride and folly. It is the name of an idol, not unique to this country or this generation. It is the love of money, and yields the Nightmare.

Prosperity can be, indeed, a blessing of God, and he sometimes gives it here in the temporal through the medium of resources. Other times he does not.

Material prosperity is also in the 'tool box' of the Devil, something he can and does use for his ends. So to prosper materially can be something God has given, a blessing indeed, or something the Devil has given, a curse indeed. It can also ride along somewhere in the middle, still on spiritual ground, proverbially, incidentally.

This is the simple, pervading truth regarding material prosperity from beginning to end of the Bible. This is not a deep insight, nor a radical theory or theology. It is simply what is portrayed in the Scriptures. But not many reference the Scriptures on this topic. Some do pull out one or two Scriptures here and there to support their agenda - as did the devil to Jesus (Mt 4:1-11) - but rarely in their picture of prosperity do they speak of Moses' suffering, Jacob's limping, the poverty and abuse of the prophets, the wandering of the faithful (Heb 11), the hunger and thirst of the apostles (1 Cor 4), the impoverished churches (Rev 2:9), the insecurity and destruction of Christ Himself as the portal to salvation.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/american-dream-prosperity-doctrine>



#4 (posted 4/7/15)

WHAT IS A CULT?

Let me just say, those I consider in a cult, consider me in a cult!:) But let me share my view on this... As a Christian I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. In that body of work I believe there is a core, 'orthodox' teaching. This central, indisputable teaching is as follows: God became man, Jesus Christ, died and rose again, and gives us eternal life through faith in him.

This is hard to get one's head around! How can Jesus Christ be one with the Father if he prayed to the Father? And yet prophecies said this is who the 'Savior' would be (Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7), and who Jesus claimed to be. (John 8:58; 10:30; John 14:7,10-11)

This is the 'mystery', the unfathomable truth, regarding Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit. It is a oneness that is beyond us, a distinction that is beyond us. It is, however, what the Scriptures teach start to finish, and what is contended for by all writers in the New Testament. (Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3, and on and on!)

A key verse here is 1 John 2:22, where John says that anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ, is a liar... so who was this 'Christ' that Jesus was meant to be, had to be in order to be the real deal? It was and is God incarnate, in the flesh.

The message is even more amazing than just WHO Jesus truly is. Now knowing and accepting that He is Lord, Jesus pours out himself into you and me! This is the '*mystery of God revealed*', i.e. '**Christ in you!**' (Colossians 1:27)

So the fullness of God in Christ, and the fullness of Christ in you - all by simply believing on him.

Any message other than this message, is not biblical. Any religion built on any 'gospel' other than this, may indeed be religious, wealthy and impressive, but is not 'sound'.

I ask people, *'What is your message if you could not tell me what church you belong to, or what church I should belong to?'*

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-is-a-cult>



WEIGHTLESS BURDEN

What you believe matters. What you believe is the fabric of what your reality is.

Do you trust, for example? If you trust her today, and what she says, your view on your very self (and where you will go this day, and what lay ahead...), changes in the believing... Do you believe, however, that she is lying to you? Again, in that instant of seeing and calling it false, your view on self, your day, your way, morphs...

Physical things impact our view on life itself, or on the spiritual. The sun shines and pours heat and light into your eyes on this morning's drive, and certain things are true in that moment to your soul. Maybe life, marriage, kids, health, are all imbued with a touch of hope, a sun ray through the heart of being... Maybe darkness and cold and rain hit your window pane this morning, and memories and words stamp your truth about your life, marriage, kids, health...

Jesus asked us to believe that he was the Son of God, in other words God's very expression of Self in human form. (John 10:30; 8:58; 5:24) This was his message. His message was not primarily one of loving your neighbor; this, rather, was what he said was the '*second most important command*'. (Matthew 22:36-40) Jesus was about 'faith'. He called on us to 'believe' that he was telling the truth - about himself - and therefore about you and me.

Without faith - without believing him and his report – we cannot and do not access that reality. We don't access each other's report without believing, and we don't access God's report without believing.

My heaviest burden today is not what I see and believe and hold, but what I do not see and do not believe and do not hold. My burden comes from a fragmented self that cannot walk, cannot stand. I have not believed God and his report about himself, and therefore about me, and I am less. This state of not being whole, not seeing clearly, not cohering, leaves me

feeling burdened down, overwhelmed, lost and heavy. But this weight on me is the weight of incompleteness in and through me. The truth is my 'weight' is what is not true to me, because of what - or who - I am not believing.

Jesus said, ***'Come to me all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest... Take my yoke upon you...'*** (Matthew 11:28-30)

To take up Christ's yoke - to believe in him - is to take rest up upon your shoulders.

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WAS JESUS SUICIDAL?

Jesus was a 'man of sorrows', and it was the Lord's will to '*crush him*'. (Isaiah 53:4,10) He knew this. He lived with this. He spoke of his own coming crucifixion. (Mt 16:21)

Many people sentenced to death take their own lives before the sentence takes it from them. Jesus uttered words of the darkest sentiment: '***My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, even to the point of death.***' (Mt 26:37). Jesus navigated life on a level of the deepest empathy with those most hurting: he wept with us (John 11:35), was moved with compassion over us (Mt 9:36), moved with pity towards us (Mk 1:41), and yet breathed words of life into those places and spaces. He promised that through himself, the '*door*' (Jn 10:9), we could live eternally (Jn 11:25-26), and know rushing waters of life from within.

Jesus was led by the Spirit of God to the desert to be tempted by the Devil. He self-starved for 40 days lest any comfort or fortitude might be attributed to his physical strength. He was surrounded by wild animals, but angels were also about him. (Mt 4:1-11) At one point in this cosmic nightmare of desolation, the devil challenges the fabric of his identity (*'If you are the Son of God...'*), and leads him - tempts him - from the top of the highest local jumping place. Jump to your death, and God will catch you, give you life.

What is suicide, but the seeking of life, not death, through death, not life? Jesus, tempted to jump, indicated that in this - this which he was being 'tempted' by - he would be testing God, which is not right.

Have you been tempted to jump? Hebrews 4:15 says that we have a '*high priest*', Jesus, '*who was tempted in every way*', and so can '*empathize with us in our weakness.*' Call on him.

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WHERE I GO

A genuine person can be false sometimes. A false person can be genuine.

Some of me is real, some not, and always a live, spiritual pursuit. I think the most childlike prayer when we see ourselves act, or see ourselves see, is to ask to be made new. This is not the same as self-loathing; it is a true cry to be redeemed, restored to factory settings, to what was intended, in and through me.

The difference we yearn for, for example, is between true innocence and naiveté; or true confidence and fear; true peace and denial... What we often settle for, however, and strive in, is to *'fake it till we make it.'* We put on a facade in the hopes it will become a real face.

As time goes on I feel like I'm thawing out or firming up, or both, or neither: becoming real by degrees and half degrees. Standing on Spirit, building on Word (Heb 1:3), on the authority of blood and not reason (Rev 5:9; Heb 12:24). I see things I did not see before, like peace in a storm, or God's goodness in a ravished land. (Mt 6:63; Jn14:27) The prophet, Ezekiel, speaks the promise of God to his weary people, ***'I will put a new spirit in you, and give you a heart of flesh for your heart of stone.'*** (Ez 36:26)

'All things new', is the promise of Christ. (Rev 21:5) The story of redemption and heaven is much like the story of life right here, right now: *completely spiritual, miraculous, deep and beyond the mind of man.*

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JUST BEING THERE

So many of the best movies and songs are reaching, even touching, but not *'knowing'*.

Tragedy is not so much that we lost the past or even the future, but that we have lost - right here right now - this present moment. We sit with our loved ones and ask somewhere deep within if we have ever really known this loved one.

Eternity is in the hearts of mankind. (Eccl 3:11) This side of eternity was dealt a fatal blow. Truly. Through our sin, our rebellion against God. Life crumpled to its knees, and rock was no longer built on for life, but cut into for tombs. The most shocking story of all time, costing God his life and you and me ours, is the *'gospel'*: the story and spirit of death being put to death, and blowing through our streets now in spirit to carry us to everlasting life. Read it, and enter it. (John 4:24; 10:9)

But here and now I am struck by these sleeping beauties, my loved ones. I sit here doing everything, by doing nothing, by not moving. They will wake soon, and I know they hurt to rise and see me gone. I will stay here. My nothing is their everything. I look at them and wonder how, when, and will I ever take in this miracle before it is gone. Oh, Jesus, help me to *'be still and know you are God'* (Psalm 46:10), and to be still and know what and who God has given me for a short while.

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STAY THE COURSE

Impossible. Inherently. Any spiritual or moral course. Chesterton wrote, *'When man goes straight, he goes crooked.'*

The most difficult course that I strive to 'stay' is the faith course, i.e. that of claiming God's report over my life, versus all other reports. God's 'real' over my 'real'.

In and through Christ, the 'door' (Jn 10:9), we enter our eternal place of being. Here, through faith, we access our truest identity, our *'forgiven self'*, our 'righteous' self. This is not an easy place to stand, when our feet feel the land of a different kingdom. But it is here, my brothers and sisters, that we are called to stand. This is the journey and course of faith, and its path will become brighter with every passing day...

(Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 1:18; Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 4:11; Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 3:3; Revelation 2:17; 2 Cor 10:3-5; John 16:11; 1 John 1:21)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/stay-the-course>



#10 (posted 7/18/15)

'WHAT I FEAR MOST IS ABSURDITY'

I love this quote – today's title - from Rushdie's *'Midnight's Children'* (1981).

We pursue meaning more than anything else. When we break it down, even in our pursuit of health, wealth and love, we are seeking to 'mean', so that we do finally rest, when we 'rest in peace'. I don't mean to be morbid here, but the only way to 'come to life' is through death and resurrection, so let's not fear the topic for a minute...

Think about it: what are you trying to grasp today that you did not 'bag' yesterday? Seriously, why were you not ready to die last night, and what are you chasing today? Meaning (not money, actually). And eternal life. Yes, if you think about it, to *'rest in peace'* in our little minds is really to somehow defy death at the point of death and live in bliss for all eternity.

Peace is not death, and nor is rest. And to rest in peace is the highest attainment of life and not death. We are all chasing meaning, and to live eternally, or rest in peace now and forevermore.

Let's skip many spheres and aspects and respects and vantage points here and cut to the chase - or cut the chase short: **Jesus came to give you meaning, now and forevermore.** If you do not really understand the simple, raw, rough and radical message that is set out in the gospel, I invite you - challenge you - to pick up one of the accounts written by Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, and read it through. A one-hour commitment, that could walk you through the door God offers you to meaning and eternal life. (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-i-fear-most-is-absurdity>



ABUSE OF POWER

Cops and good guys. Seems to be all over social media these days. It makes my heart drop every time I scroll over a video rolling. I never actually watch them. I just can't. Same story, different day, different city, different whatever. Same story. When bad guys are bad guys, we have badness. When good guys are bad guys, we have evil.

This really matters. **God hates power abuse.** Jesus said, **'Woe to you, teachers of the law** [cops?]**... keeping your traditions** [thin blue line?], **you break God's law!**' (Mt 23:23)

Two quick things on this:

First, there is a Law higher than the law, and it will prevail. Any man or woman that is in power and abuses it, will answer for this. Power is to steward, not to 'have' and to 'wield.' It belongs to Another, and we will answer for parts we have been asked to play. (*John 19:10-11; Psalm 94:16; Micah 6:8; Matthew 18:6; Matthew 12:36*)

Secondly, what power do *I* have? Do I abuse my parental power, my spousal power, my fraternal, employer, employee power? Do I abuse my alone-time power, screen-time power, social-media power? Do I abuse my free-will power, my thought power, money power? My stomach turns at the videos that flit before me, because they *are* me. God forgive me, and heal our nation, in Jesus' name.

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JESUS IN CONSTANT DISTRESS

Are you in distress? Stressed?

Jesus was a man of peace - indeed the model of being kept in '*perfect peace*' (Is 26:3) - but he was also a man of sorrows (Is 53:4). I love those Scriptures that connect Christ to my own range of emotion: he wept (John 11:35), was moved with compassion (Matthew 9:36), felt pity and acted (Mark 1:41), was angry with people (Mark 3:5). He wanted things to be different (Matthew 26:38-39), and felt God had turned his back. (Matthew 27:46) ***Can you relate?***

One Scripture that jumps out to me is Luke 12:50, where Jesus says that he has a baptism to undergo, and is in distress 'until' it is accomplished. Jesus carried a weight of foreboding darkness in his spirit throughout his walk in and through life. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4 that '*we carry around in our bodies the death of Jesus...*' (vs 11)

A walk with Christ will look and feel like Christ's walk: Joy and revelation ineffable (2 Cor 12:4), and trials and confusions that course through our existence until we are fully liberated. (Romans 8:23) If you are in distress, and yet are in Christ, you are very close to him in this place. (Philippians 3:10)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/jesus-in-constant-distress>



SHOW US A SIGN

A couple brief thoughts on 'signs' and Jesus. According to Scripture, Jesus was doing signs all the time - except when *asked* for a 'sign'. His signs had purpose, were never simply to demonstrate power; the healing or 'sign' powers were to demonstrate, ultimately, his power to forgive sin and give eternal life. (Gal 1:4) Prior to healing the paralytic, he said, **'Your sins are forgiven!'** Then he said these key words, to preface the 'sign' he was about to give:

'That you may know that I have authority to forgive sins... rise, be healed' (Mark 2:10-11)

Jesus turned water to wine, and only the servants knew of this (though the whole party partook of the power, John 2:9). Jesus, turned bread into more bread, but then told the very people who ate this bread, when they 'demanded a sign', that they would not be given a sign. (Mark 8:12, cf John 6:26) Jesus would not give a 'sign' when it could have spared him his own life. (Luke 23:8)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/show-us-a-sign>



THE PRESSURE OF JOY

Chief goal, per Aristotle's *Ethics*, is 'happiness'. (page 2 or 3, if I remember correctly) Happiness is not a guide, however, it is a goal. Ever used 'happy' as a guide, and found 'sad'? Me too.

The Bible sets out 'revelation' to tell us what God's truth is, who he is, and how we can and should navigate to find true happiness. I am a pilgrim on this journey.

Jesus, for the 'joy' set before him, endured the cross. (Hebrews 12:2) The cross, at one very dark and yet significant time in Jesus' life, was in line with, on the road to, complete happiness. It was - and maybe you relate - a time when Jesus asked God to change the course (Matthew 26:39), felt as if God had abandoned him (Matthew 27:46), and was so deeply distressed that he sweat blood in anticipation. (Luke 22:44)

David, walking in truth and in his calling, was up and down - like you and me - in his feelings. He kept his course, however, at these dark and confusing times, and asked God to bring the 'joy'. He did not flail and swing left or right to shake the feeling of sadness and find happiness somewhere else or in being someone else. He knew where he needed to be, who he needed to be, and asked God to bring the 'joy'.

'Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.'
(Psalm 86:4)

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ENVY

Proverbs 27:4 tells us that anger is 'cruel', and fury 'overwhelming', but **'before a jealous man, who can stand?'**

Abstract 'Anger' gets an adjective, and so does 'Fury', but the force and destruction of one jealous man is simply described by a rhetorical question, asking what or who can resist such force. No words, really, to qualify its dark and relentless onset, and no effort to define or trap its spirit. Simply, where there is envy, there is a destroyer.

Envy is spirit, and operates at the core of our free will to move towards God as friend or foe. The devil became the devil because the power he had was not enough. (Jude 1:6) Mankind became what we are and know because Eden was not enough. (Genesis 3:5) Envy is a power struggle from deep within that is not primarily about me and my neighbor, but me and God. And it is not primarily about what I have and want, but about *who* God is and his report of truth.

To break chains of envy inside you, and that come against you, you must first take a faith stand in who God says he is. His terms on himself is the key to freedom for the soul.

(Exodus 3:14; John 1:1-5; John 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

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ELIJAH

This guy blows my mind, but embodies the very spirit of God's truth and ways. The most intoxicating moment for me in Elijah's story is the following, found in 1 Kings 19.

After 3 years alone with God in the desert, he takes on and slays 900 priests of Baal. Word is sent to their patroness, Jezebel, who decrees that she will kill Elijah for this, within one day. Elijah fears and flees to a mountain cave. Note the drama and the spiritual forces at work here: Elijah kills 900, is threatened by 1, and runs.

But here is where we see and feel the very connection of man with God. After 40 days of running, Elijah is alone inside a cave. God tells Elijah to step out of the cave to meet with him. Elijah waits for the signal. Such a forceful wind blows that it *'tore the mountains apart, and shattered rocks.'* But we are told the Lord was not in this wind. Then an earthquake, then a fire. But the Lord was not in the earthquake, nor the fire. Then a **'gentle whisper'**. The Lord was in the whisper, and Elijah steps out of the cave to meet the Lord.

This man knew God's voice, and was not even distracted by earthquakes and shattering rocks. ***Do you know God's voice?*** (John 10:27)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/elijah>



#17 (posted 8/25/15)

THE REAL ME

There's a 'real' me somewhere. I just know it. I pursue it almost relentlessly. Very little else actually drives and wearies me. Red eyes, squinting to see self.

Eyes are the window to the soul. You see others through yours, through theirs. I was looking in my daughter's eyes yesterday, 5 years old, and I could hardly see past my own reflection in her pupils. It's like God made your clearest you, in looking deep into another.

The clearest 'self' you will ever discern, is the self you see when gazing into the eyes of God. Jesus said,

'The eyes are the lamp of the body. When the eyes are good, the whole body is full of light...' (Mt 6:23).

What are your eyes set on? There you will see your reflection.

'... we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' (1 John 3:2)

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WEEPING PLACE: FOUND

Aristotle writes that the chief good or 'end' is happiness (Ethics, page 3). I'm thinking clear skies, smiles, safety, all things good.

So what about tragedy? Is there no 'place' or presence or redemption in the depths of darkness? Is the only way to be 'happy' - or at peace - to get out of, away from, all things dark and bad? We paddle, scramble, run and claw ourselves away from the dark; but to relax, relent or be blindsided is to slide back down into the pit... Are you exhausted? Me too. Is there no place of dependable peace, despite circumstances, like peace in a storm?

There is a trapdoor to another dimension, another realm. Jesus said, **'I am the door...'** (Jn 10:9) Jesus also said that he gives a peace that is different, not the vulnerable type the world gives. (Jn 14:27; Mt 7:24-25) Jesus says we can here and now be **'hidden with him, in God'**. (Col 3:3)

'He is kept in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on the Lord.' (Isaiah 26:3)

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DEVIL SPEAKS TRUTH

I've done it, and it's been done to me. Someone - *'with malice in their heart'* (Ps 5) - will say something 'true', so that you will get caught up in your own lie.

For example, smiling, half in jest whole in earnest, the jealous man says to you, *'You don't deserve that new car!'* You feel the dark cloud descending on an otherwise sunny day, and you scramble to save the sunshine; you say, *'The year I've had, I do deserve this!'*

Proverbs 26:4 tells us to not answer a fool according to his folly, *'lest you become like him.'* What happened in above scenario is the fool spoke 'truth': you don't deserve it; we don't deserve *anything*. We should never speak on this level about anything we have, or anything others have.

Paul writes in Corinthians, ***'What do you have that you have not been given? And if you have been given it, why do act as if you have not?'***
(1 Corinthians 4:7)

Perhaps the most extreme example of the deepest truth masking the deepest lie, is when the devil himself speaks 'truth' to Jesus. Jesus, weary and hungry, is approached by the devil and challenged. The devil tests him *not* by lying, which is his native tongue (John 8:44), but by the other extreme of his strategies, i.e. dressing to look like *'an angel of light'*. (2 Cor 11:14)

The devil quotes the bible to Jesus, and, on the surface, correctly. He quotes Psalm 91:11-12, messianic Scriptures to the Messiah. You can read about this exchange in Matthew 4:1-11. Note, when Jesus had so purely walked in wisdom, and the Spirit of truth, the devil shows his true motive – which was for Jesus to worship him, the devil. (Mt 4:9) We won't unpack it here, but suffice to say, truth is not *'word-deep'*. Truth is spirit, and words - even words from the Bible - can be a cloak of malice.

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LOST IN A CROWD

Two things make us feel small and insignificant. One comes from the brokenness 'upon' us, the other from the brokenness within us.

Everything about mortal life puts everything in a morbid light. Where life has a 'finish line', we scramble to make everything mean something between the 'start' and 'finish'. That's a lot of pressure. That's very little time. And then there is the terrifying analogy of '*making beds in a burning house*', in the event there is nothing in the hereafter.

We aim for the (American) 'dream', because reality is just too dark. Every grown adult, interestingly, speaking of pursuing the 'dream', when we chastise children for living in a dream. Faith we mock, and yet dreams we live, cheat, steal and die for.

Cutting to the chase here, let's '*hear*' the report: God made life perfect, and made mankind in God's own image. Man and woman, are 'like' God, so much so that Jesus silenced some onlookers by quoting Psalm 82:6 and saying, '**You are all gods.**' (John 10:34)

When we the created reject(ed) the Creator, this rebellion is deep, dark, no floor, and all things unholy; it presents and expresses on different levels, but the same spirit. This world is of this 'spirit' and we live in it (brokenness upon us). This spirit is also from and within us (brokenness within). Taken together - the devil's report and our pride's appetite - we feel insignificant to God.

If you read through the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), you will find that God became man, Jesus Christ, and set you back in your rightful reality with God: *a spiritual, meaningful, God-imaged individual*. Jesus took every man, woman and child, not only in their own right (or 'name'), but beyond that to an even truer, redeemed 'name'. He often changed people's names, to make them even more unique, express that they were '*forgiven*' and '*set apart*' by him, now and forevermore.

(Revelation 2:17; Mark 10:21; Mark 14:1-9)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/lost-in-a-crowd>



BLISSFULLY UNAWARE

We idolize 'self-awareness', and then travel the world to 'lose ourselves'. In Greek mythology the river of forgetfulness ('Lethé') bordered heaven ('Elysium'). Or we might 'read', heaven is an impossible state without forgetting our lives here on earth.

More recently, GK Chesterton (1874-1936) wrote that *'everything we call bliss or ecstasy or spirit... only means that for one awful instant we remember [or become aware of] that we forgot.'* A state of forgetting what? Everything that life was *never* meant to be, and resulted in man killing man, and man killing God. (Genesis chapter 4, Mark 15)

We were made to be fully aware of God, and aware of anything else in different measures and moments as an overflow. This mirrors what Jesus said was the *'greatest commandment'*, i.e. ***'To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.'*** (Matthew 22:36-40; Deuteronomy 6:4-5). And what overflowed from that, or what was leftover, Jesus called us to direct toward each other. (Leviticus 19:18)

We are called to be 'God-aware', and aware of our neighbor. Let God be 'you-aware', and tell you what that really means and 'is', on that final day.
(*Revelation 2:17; 1 Corinthians 13:9,12; 1 John 3:2*)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/blissfully-unaware>



SHIP OFF THE ROCKS

I lived on a ship, Logos, for 2 years, 1979-1981 (4-6 years old). The ship ran aground in 1988 in the Beagle Channel, South America, middle of the night. No one lost their lives of the c.150 people on board, and the ship is still there today as seen in this photo. (see *online post for photo*)

This morning my mind's eye glimpsed a small boat, a row boat, at that moment when it just lifts off the stony bed of a lake or seashore. When the scrapes on the bottom of the boat go quiet, and the still becomes motion, and the horizon opens up before you. Left and right dissipate into 'everywhere' and 'anywhere', and light skips like stones off the water in and out of your eye, your heart.

Two Scriptures meet me here:

'He has put eternity in the hearts of men.'
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

And Jesus' words,

'Anyone who believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within him.' (John 7:38)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/ship-off-the-rocks>



HEAVEN ON EARTH

We strive! We ache to escape. We swim upstream every hour of every day, against all things 'decay'. It feels like scaling up a mudslide. What exactly are we reaching for? Peace? Safety?

It's legit! Jesus himself not only sanctions this scramble, but frames it from Genesis to Revelation in much more stunning intensity, intentionality, realism and relentlessness, than we do in any genre of literature or tragedy. His own instruction to us is to pray, '***your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...***' (Mt 6:9-13)

So what does God's kingdom on earth look like? Many things. Ineffable spirit. '***New heart and new spirit.***' (Ez 36:26) Forgiveness in all directions. Repentance. But one thing is also true: heaven on earth makes heaven look so *far* from earth! Let me explain...

When Jesus floods your senses (Jn 7:37-38) and your spirit (Eph 1:14) and mind (Romans 12:1-2), and you do experience the peace of '*laying down in green pastures*' and by '*streams of water*' (Ps 23), and he changes your water to wine... well, here you taste, you feel, even for just a breath, a split second, what sinless, eternal streets of heaven are, and your yearning intensifies. Paul says, when considering to live or die,

'I would prefer by far to depart and be with Christ...'
(Philippians 1:23)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/heaven-on-earth>



BOOKSTORES DEPRESS/ELATE ME!

At first I feel inspired! I walk in, smell the coffee, and feel significant. Knowledge everywhere, to make me *more!* And people's etchings and screeds, means (subconsciously) that they are, that I, therefore, am, and now can be more...

And then after a while, from gimmicks to gizmos, bonsai kits to self-destruct guides, coffee gone and sun going down... I feel kind of inane. Lost in a sea of more knowledge and people and vantage points than I could ever, ever assimilate. And if I can't know it all (be like god), how can I be at all?

So the one tree that we could *not* eat of, was the '*tree of knowledge...*' (Genesis 3:5-6) We were warned that this was the portal to death. The devil told us it was the portal to 'be like god.' We ate, eyes were opened, life destroyed. Now every man, woman and child is marked by death, from the day we celebrate their life. And here is the neglected reality of the '*sting of death*' (1 Cor 15): it is not just in the body, but in the spirit, the mind, relationships, the earth (Romans 8), the animals, history and annals and legacies.

It is against this backdrop of the truth of the dark, that the truth of God's light means so much. It is against the backdrop of the crucifixion, and all that died with it, that the light of the resurrection is so bright, and all that lives in it.

Bookshops elate me because God made every man, woman and child unique (Gen 1:27; Psalm 139), and Jesus treated every man, woman and child as unique. And the truest essence of any individual - in book form or otherwise - is to tap the spirit of God's unity in himself, and with us, his offspring. Jesus himself challenged and stretched us by quoting scripture and saying, '**You are all sons of god...**' (John 10:34; Psalm 82:6). But he stretched us about the nature of our own 'deity', so that we would be in no doubt about his. (John 10:36)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/bookstores-depresselate-me>



CHRISTENED AT DEATH

Jesus changed everybody's names (Saul to Paul, Simon to Peter, John/James to Boanerges, etc.). Their new name had nothing to do with their past or heritage, and everything to do with who they were in regards to Jesus.

One verse that I find powerful and freeing is in Revelation 2:17. Jesus, through the prophet John, admonishes a church to 'persevere' in the face of much trial and tribulation, and says that if and when they prevail, he will give to each a *'new name written on a white stone, that is known only to them'*.

There is so much in this, but one factor of interest is that the name comes at the end. Jesus calls us to action first, to know his name most clearly here and now, and to act on it. And we will be given our truest, deepest name as a result of this.

This gives us something to shoot for, most definitely, but also frees us from having to be 'clear' about who we are at this time. We need to be most clear about who he is. Who we are, will be made clear by him on that final day.

(1 Corinthians 13:9,12; 1 John 3:2; Hebrews 4:11; Philippians 3:12-14)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/christened-at-death>



'I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!'

You will fail and fall under a cause and king - the question is which one?

'I can't take it anymore!' - These were the words of a great prophet, to God himself. (Elijah, 1 Kings 19:4) Not only did God tenderly concede help to Elijah, but he 're-issued' him (so to speak!) in the person of John the Baptist (Mt 11:14), and also called him forth to appear with Jesus and Moses in the 'transfiguration'. (Mt 17:3)

Some people's greatest victory is finally falling to the ground, like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, the last moments of eternal breakthrough.

There is a crumbling under the weight of truth and life, that is different from crumbling under our own folly and dissipation. Men of God, over and over, weary of the battle between light and darkness, fell to their knees and *'could not take it anymore'*.

These men, dear fighters, will rise to greatness. (*Hebrews 11; Exodus 33; Matthew 11:1-11; Luke 12:8-9*)

Whose battle do you fight with all your vigor? Whose cause is your life's cause?

'Jesus said, 'The greatest commandment is this, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.' (Matthew 22:36-40)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/i-cant-take-it-anymore>



PREACH WHAT YOU PRACTICE

I am a chief hypocrite in 2 ways. I speak of things that I do not and cannot live. I live convictions that I do not speak.

My dad used to say that you could fall off either side of a horse. There is nothing harder to take than hypocrisy - someone not practicing what they preach to others. But there is something as hard to take: someone not preaching what they live, what they believe. I fail miserably in both.

Regarding the former, because of my pride; regarding the latter, because of my cowardice.

One indicator regarding my 'health' in hypocrisy - or in practicing what I preach - is how I deal with others not practicing what they preach. CS Lewis once wrote, *'We must not be pharisaical, even to Pharisees.'* I have been at my most judgmental when I denounce a judgmental person.

Jesus, in the 'Sermon on the Mount', levels the playing field, puts the man who calls a man a 'fool', shoulder to shoulder with the murderer; puts a man who lusts in his heart, side by side with the adulterer. Even the archangel, Michael, rebuked the devil, not by judging him, but by saying, *'The Lord rebuke you.'* (Jude 1:9)

My passive hypocrisy can be considered, at least on one level, regarding what I do believe to be true, but do not 'preach' - or what I do not own and make known. ***'He who knows the good he ought to do, but does not do it, is guilty of sin.'*** (James 4:17).

I believe certain things to be wrong - for me and for everyone - but I do them, and I do not speak out against them.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/preach-what-you-practice>



ALWAYS SPIRIT

True and false words are exactly the same. Same letters of the same alphabet string together the same words used by the good guys and the bad guys... In fact, even the 'holy writ' can be unholy in the mouth of the unholy. (cf Mt 4:1-11) So the words just carry the spirit of the speaker.

For this reason there is no encasement - not the words of the Bible, not a religion, not a leader (1 Cor 3:23) – that secure for us the truth of God. Jesus said that his own words '*were spirit*' (John 6:63), that '*God is spirit*' (John 4:24), that the '*Lord is spirit*'. (2 Cor 3:17)

Jesus told the 'rich young ruler' that the 10 commandments were not enough (Mark 10:17-27), and the church in Ephesus that their obedience and hard work was not enough. (Revelation 2:1-5) Jesus was always unpredictable to us, not because he did not know himself or the Father (cf John 5:19), but because we do not know what our own words truly carry, where our spirit really is in relation to God.

To one he would simply say yes (Mk 1:41), to another a calibrating challenge (Mk 9:36), to another an apparently abrasive denial (Mt 15:21-28), and on and on, different every time. But always with the same purpose: to get past our words, to our heart, to bring our spirit together with his spirit. (Mt 22:36-40)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/always-spirit>



WHAT IS?

When finally pouring out a confession on Sonia, Rodya recounts 4 or 5 plausible motives for his crime. (*'Crime and Punishment'*, Dostoyevsky, 1865) He agonizes as his own true motive evades him. His own self, as it were, eludes him. He seeks but does not find.

The deepest pursuit, the one which requires most calm, most quiet, is our pursuit within, searching for self, not adventure. We break into the quiet and dark hours of dawn to find a path for the day.

What was yesterday, exactly? What was that relationship? Was it love? Do I know what love is? What self is satisfied in this aspiration? Is this footing really a footing? Where's the floor? When I feel safe, what wall marks safety for me? When I forget tragedy and all is good, is tragedy forgotten, or are those people just forgotten by me? Am I asking the right questions? Am I understanding the issues? Are my motives in asking sufficient to acquit me of the cosmic confusions, the global travesties, the blood on my hands - or on his hands - that I ignore?

'It's a long way down to nothing at all.' (*'Stuck in a Moment'*, U2)
It is against the backdrop of being - of not being - that a bedrock of *'spirit being'* rings true. God told Moses, as a first floor for His own identity, to give the people this His name: **'I Am.'** (Ex 3:14) Jesus claimed this name (John 10:30; 18:37), and said that he would pour this name in Spirit form through the core of all who believe on him. (John 1:12; 5:24)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-is>



VAL-YOU

I knew a guy with a valuable book collection. I remember when I was told that his time was limited due to an illness. At that moment, there was not a book collection in the world that felt of much worth to me.

What makes anything valuable in this life? Is it not the love that goes into it? This love becomes 'value' and comes back to the lover. When you cease to love it - or cease to be - its value ceases. I think this is the haunting mystery of a derelict mansion. Deep, deep down we wonder what 'love' was at work through the corridors, what people were sacrificed for these ruins. And deeper down, we wonder what we are loving, living, and losing on the way...

'God is love.' (1 John 4:8) That love made you in his image (Gen 1:27), and pours through you back to himself. You are deeply valuable. This Love, this God, became man and walked with us, up to us, and calls us through His own '*door*' to salvation. (John 10:9)

'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'
(Matthew 6:21)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/val-you>



WHERE YOU'RE PUT

What does the bully in the playground and the CEO have in common? Well, in differing measures and histories, both have been 'given' their land, their sphere of jurisdiction.

Think of the hundreds and thousands of choices by others that underpin the infrastructure of the playground and the successful business, at any given time in history - relationships, politics, markets, weather, loyalties, betrayals, health, agreement, disagreement...

That big, brash boy in the schoolyard, well, he didn't choose his size and strength, but he is choosing how to use it.

'Do you not realize I have the power to set you free or to put you to death?' Pilate asked Jesus. (Jn 19:10)

Jesus did not dispute this, but referenced a Power higher than Pilate's power: ***'You would not have this power if it had not been given to you by my Father.'*** (Jn 19:11)

Here the focus changes drastically - for Pilate and for us. It suggests that when all is said and done we will give an account for the 'power' (or positions) we held in this life - child, sibling, parent, colleague, employee, boss.

Do I see my role as 'given to me' and do I live my role ***'as working for God and not for men'***? (Col 3:23)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/where-youre-put>



CAFÉ WORLD PEACE

CS Lewis said that what we 'fear' about poverty - why we recoil from it and them - is because we fear 'insecurity', or un-safety.

We are born into a life broken on all sides, on a one-way street to 'lights-out'. The world rallies to shelter kids from this reality for as long as possible (that is, if we are not kidnapping and abusing kids). Denial, abuse, fear on all sides. Let's not be morbid, but let's at least give a nod to the backdrop here...

I love coffee. I'm in good company, as coffee is the world's second most traded product, second only to oil. It has that savory kick which takes life seriously, but then steps higher with rich aroma, and warming steam on the outside - to come between us and all evil - and warm on the inside that says there's hope, comfort.

There's hope, and then there's *living* hope - a **'hope that does not disappoint.'** (Romans 5:5) Jesus brought the promise of life, to life. He brought the Word off the page. (John 1:14) He took death captive, and put it to death. (1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

One of the most dramatic images that Christ gave about his own message and salvation, is when he said, **'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.'** (John 10:9).

'... If you only knew this day what would bring you peace!'
(Luke 19:42)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/cafe-world-peace>



#33 (posted 9/15/15)

WELCOME HEALING

What do you do, with what you know is true? Now truth, as you know, is not 'fact', but spirit. For example, '*Great shot, buddy!*' - is the true statement about a child's bad shot.

What do you do - or have you done - with the deep, '*truer truths*' that have come your way? Those 'truths' that you need, you crave, you seek, you even demand - but then *don't* accept?

You know what I mean here, at least the sphere. That's why an individual - not you, of course - has already come to mind. So yes, we're talking about that deep, challenging area of the soul that has been hurt somewhere, by someone, and now pivots on brokenness. I marvel at the strength I see in people getting on - even if they don't get up - after such hurt.

But let me speak to this war zone of the soul for just a few lines. God speaks through a prophet 600 years before Jesus appeared, and says, '***I have engraved your name on the palm of my hand.***' (Isaiah 49:16) Then after Jesus came, lived, loved, died, rose again, it is written, '***He has purchased men with his blood.***' (Revelation 5:9)

You are deeply loved, and Jesus said time and time again that in him, through him, we enter new life, now and forevermore.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/welcome-healing>



BLIND SIGHTED

Blind Sighted: Having eyes that see, but not seeing.

I've ruined many a memory-maker by trying to make the memory instead of the moment. I've lost the present regretting the past, etc.

Wish you could go back in time and 'see' some people or situations differently? Wish you knew then what you know now - about life, love, true treasure - and bring that 'sight' back to the moment?

What is true seeing? Many a blind man sees. Many a seeing man is truly blind.

Perhaps the most dramatic example in history of the 'blind sighted' - second only to myself - is when Jesus said to Pilate, **'Everyone on the side of truth listens to me'**, and Pilate said back, **'What is truth?'** (John 18:37-38).

Jesus said, **'The eyes are the lamp of the body. If the eyes are good, the whole body is full of light...'** (Matthew 6:23)

Jesus also said, **'I am the light the world. He who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'** (John 8:12)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/blind-sighted>



YOUR GLORY, YOUR RAGE

Jesus was only secondarily a humanitarian and socialist. Primarily, he was a God-itarian, and Kingdom-of-Godist.

For this reason, despite the many sorrows of society that surrounded Jesus - which *did* move him to compassion (Matthew 9:36) - when asked what was most important, he said, ***'To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.'***

That's a lot of love, time and effort - for God. Then what is left, spills out and over, we are called to give to each other. Jesus went on to say, the second-most important command is to ***'love your neighbor.'*** (Matthew 22:26-30)

God's 'house of prayer' made a 'market' is what drove Jesus to make a whip and wreak havoc in the temple. (John 2:14-16)

What moves you more - your 401K or Slavery in America today? Racism or Republicanism? Your nation, or God's creation? Your friendships, or God's souls? What do you pray for (or worry about) more? Jesus put it this way, ***'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.'*** (Matthew 6:21)

Come back to God. Put him first. (Joel 2:13) When we come to and through the door that is Jesus (John 10:9), he will pour *'living waters'* to and through and from you. (John 7:37-38) These waters - his waters for his kingdom - we let spill out and over others.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/your-glory-your-rage>



DON'T WANNA KNOW

She was studying journalism, Trinity College Dublin, 1996. Killing time at the launderette we talked... She shared her views on God and spirituality, had decided that we're all branches of the same tree. A popular view. All gods the same god, effectively, and everyone's right, so to speak.

We then discussed this one 'scenario': What if - just what if - only *one* of these 'gods' was true, and all others false. We considered the implications of this a little further. What if this 'true' god, claimed to be the '**only true God**', and called mankind not only to believe and live this, but to make it known to others; to not accept or condone other 'false gods'.

What if this '*true God*', brought with him all the treasures of truth and eternal life, but called us to lay down our lives to have and hold this treasure... If the one true God could be known, at *this* cost, 'Would you want to know?' She said, 'No.'

'Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/dont-wanna-know>



#37 (posted 9/21/15)

'BUT WHO DO YOU SAY...?'

I know what the world should do, just not what *I* should do. I know how and why countries should be at peace, just can't make peace with my own neighbor. I know what *you* should think about all religions, without knowing what I think about any particular religion...

I find it interesting - shrewd and fascinating - that Jesus asked the disciples what others were saying about him. They knew, and they told him - everything ranging from a promised prophet to a reincarnated prophet. He then asked them,

'But who do you say that I am?' (Matthew 16:15)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/but-who-do-you-say>



GET IN THE ZONE!

Thinking about my career today, what it is I am aiming for, and why. When I really break it down, I'm looking for less pressure (**peace?**), more security (**safety?**), and greater responsibility (**purpose?**). I'm looking for that perfect career that makes life worth living.

It is possible to ask a question to someone who cannot answer it. It is possible to seek fulfillment and meaning in places, that cannot provide it. One proverb that I find most challenging, even disconcerting, says, **'If we seek faith, love and righteousness, we find life, prosperity and honor.'** (Proverbs 21:21)

Most of us seek *'life, prosperity and honor'* (the 'American Dream?'), but never find it when we seek it.

God, through his Word, is saying that *'life, prosperity and honor'* - the real ones - are in the wake of pursuing **'faith, love and righteousness.'**

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FREEDOM BEYOND DOUBT

You got money, or does money got you? You got fame, or does fame got you? You got intelligence... social life... career.... religion.... or do they got you? You got doubts, or do doubts got you? Etc etc.

What you 'got' in this life, must be small enough for you to 'get', and that's pretty small.

'God, in his wisdom, made it so that man in his wisdom, would not find God.' (1 Corinthians 1:21)

If God were such that he fit your mind and even heart and soul, and your 'take' on history and justice and love... He wouldn't fit anyone else's...

We fit in God, not God in us. We come forth from his image, not he from ours.

And there is a place in and through Jesus Christ where the devil does not want you free, so he holds you back with what you've done and what you know. He wants you desperately to subject God to 'yourself', and so hold you in that small sphere. (Rev 12:10)

Same with your own 'heart' and pride. Your heart also wants the 'hold' on God, so will **'condemn you'**, when God says you're free. (1 John 3:20) Beyond the devil's accusation, and beyond your own heart's condemnation, there's a 'faith space', where God calls you to into unfathomable, eternal freedom.

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/freedom-beyond-doubt>



OPEN MIND HELL

The only problem with demanding the right to know and choose anything and everything, is we get the right to know and choose anything and everything.

Most of what I know, I now wish I did not know - which is simply the facts of what I or others have chosen to do. So it is not that I don't want to know, but that I wish certain things were never done, 'unknowable' to anyone, as it were...

But that would restrict my rights! So what we have, is what we want, is what we've done, is what now fills our minds, hearts and soul.

Two thoughts on this: First, God told mankind to not eat of the 'tree of knowledge'. He said we would die. The serpent, however, told us that knowing all and choosing ourselves, would make us 'like god.' Who can resist such a promise? They could not, Nietzsche could not*, Jesus was tempted to, and we succumb every day. (Genesis 3:5; Matthew 4:9)

Secondly, Paul writes: ***'They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator... Because of this, God gave them over...'*** (Romans 1:25-26)

**'If there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god? Therefore, there are no gods!' (F.Nietzsche, 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', 1885)*

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/open-mind-hell>



BE KNOWN

To *'know thyself'* (nosce teipsum) is, at least, something we can try for... After all, you are the subject and the object of this endeavor. You can think about you all day, every day, till you cease thinking and being...

And just when you think you know you, the sun sets and rises and there's a new you that you never knew, 'cause today's 'you' could not have been factored in yesterday...

We don't seem to take the same path with 'love', however. We do not strive to find and hold and keep our true 'lovableness'. What we do is find and fall into the eyes of a Lover. In finding love, in being loved by Another, we believe ourselves to be 'lovable'. So to borrow from Socrates, we might ask: *'Is he loved because he is lovable, or is he lovable because he is loved?'* (cf Eutyphro)

Well, anyone who has been loved or has loved, would not subject its truth to our comprehension of it. We live it, and breathe it, and lament the tragedy of any man, woman or child who loses it to questioning...

Throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, God calls us to know him and to love him. In this pursuit of God, we come to know true love, and know our true self. Much like love, however, the more you know it in truth, the less words you will ever wrap around its definition and scope. This is the same for your own true self. The more you know God, the deeper you will know yourself, and the less you will strive to define who that is.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/be-known>



SEE(K)

Saunders coined, but Lennon famously said/sang, '*Life is what happens when you're making plans.*' Even today I pondered what I would be remembered for, and this thought flashed through my little mind: Those who care about me most, will not remember me for who I think I am.

The truest you is in the spirit, emotions and actions of that child-like you. That unselfconscious, earnest, trusting and tender person that preceded the proud, self-aware and ambitious one. The person that connected to people and smiled unawares with people, before networking or money had worked its spirit into the soul.

So who knows that true you? Who delights in that true you? That person will be doing the 'remembering' when you're gone.

Two things of deep note: Jesus said unless we became like children we would not enter the kingdom of God. (Mt 18:3) That is a powerful, calibrating statement. That child trusts fully, delights in, follows... God. That was Jesus' point. Are you, like a child, in the courts and kingdom of God?

Secondly, God is eternal, and he breathed us forth in his own image. (Gen 1:27) He set this 'eternity' in our hearts with intention. (Eccl 3:11) We are called to set our eyes back on him, and in Christ to come after him.

Jesus said we would find life by losing it to him. (Mk 8:34-38) '*Being*' - or true self - is what happens when we seek God.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/seek>



GET GOD GONE!

Sometimes I go to church, to have gone to church. Get that done and dusted, so I can get on with living, working, worrying... God in a box. Signed, sealed, and delivered out of the way.

It is against this backdrop - and core, universal trait of all mankind - that the question to, and answer from Jesus is so profound. A theology teacher of the day asked Jesus, ***'What is the most important command?'***

Jesus replied, ***'To love the Lord your God, with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.'***

(Matthew 22:36-40)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/get-god-gone>



#44 (posted 10/2/15)

CHASING DREAMS

Do you really want that other job? Do you really want to change that car or house or watch or channel - and pour all that time and effort and distraction into that?

If you look around you, for a quiet moment, and defy the general angst and sorrow of life and living, you might see your dream already come true. Is there a kid, or spouse, or parent, who you now, this very instant, have the time and resources to love? Maybe a call, or coffee, or puzzle? What, exactly, am I running from or running to, if right here, right now, I have the dream?

'Jesus stood up and said, 'Is anyone thirsty? Let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me... streams of living water will flow from within him.' (John 7:37-38)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/chasing-dreams>



HEAVEN

This morning was one of those days. Rain still coming down hard. A couple days ago I had a young man - very young - speaking to me about his own 'suicidal thoughts', which he always associated with darkness descending outside, then inside...

So this morning my mind continued to race up and down corridors of 'discipline', truths we have to believe and hold, in order to stand firm on solid ground. And this battle is real, and necessary, and daily. But then I cast my thoughts to heaven...

I pictured stepping out of the ocean, in crystal blue waters now, onto warm, comforting, white sand. The sunlight beating heat onto my body and into my soul. Respite. Arrival.

There are 2 powerful passages and pictures of heaven in the very last 2 chapters of the Bible, and at the end of a 'raging sea' that is the book of Revelation.

In chapter 21:1-5 and chapter 22:1-5 (look them up!), we see a place not only of outward bliss, but of inward capacity to enjoy; there we will stand beside crystal clear waters flowing from a throne, through a city, with trees with leaves that 'heal nations'. We will have no 'sun' because the Son will be the light. There will be no more sadness within, no more tears without, no more sorrow. There will be no more struggle in the soul to hold to truth, because Truth will hold us.

(Revelation 21:1-5; Revelation 22:1-5; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2; John 5:24)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/heaven>



RELIGION

Religion describes everything we think we are doing for God, but that he is actually doing for us.

Ever thanked a kid for something you shouldn't have - like eating their dinner - and then they actually say, '*You're welcome!*'?

Well, I have 5 kids, and lots of these stories... You wanna bark at the chillen that they are the one who should be saying '*thanks*', but then why did I say thanks?

The point here is that we 'do' for God, things that he's doing for us, and we actually think that *he* should thank *us*. Jesus lived and died to fill our life story with spirit and meaning. We think we suffer church for Christ, when actually he suffered that we might have and enjoy church, a light and haven in the dark week.

We sacrifice money for Christ, when actually he came and set us free from the love and dictatorship that money had on my life and soul. We sacrifice worldly experiences, when actually he brought us a 'door' to heaven, so that we now have deep and eternal purpose in avoiding worldly experiences.

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/religion>



#47 (posted 10/7/15)

TRUEST YOU

We cheer kids on. We cheer adults on. We cheer when someone is going after a goal, laying hold of a dream, business or rehabilitation. We cheer not because of what it is, primarily, but because of what it means. We cheer for the same reason we lament when that same 'dream' becomes a nightmare, when you no longer hold and pursue it, but it holds and pursues you. We now find ourselves pleading with you to let it go, to not let it define you, to not see yourself bound up in it...

If you sign up to the dream and put your soul in it, you sign up to the nightmare also.

Jesus said, ***'My words are spirit and they are life.'*** (John 6:63). And the truest you, the one we cheer and rush to rescue, is spirit.

'I have carved your name in the palm of my hand.'
(Isaiah 49:16)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/truest-you>



GOD OWES ME

'*Good deeds*' are indeed good. He who judges another man's good deeds should take off his sandals and back away, for he treads on holy ground.

Scripture is full of admonition to do good, and even the deeds of men who worshiped pagan gods came up before the true God, and moved him to reveal himself. (Acts 10:1-4)

But good is only good, insofar as it is good. And herein lies the perennial prob' with all things Scripture. When Jesus was addressed as '*Good Teacher!*' he quickly exposed our motive for reciprocal praise, and responded:

'Who is good? No one is good except God alone.'
(Mark 10:18)

In dealing with God and Jesus, there is no reference to our goodness. It does not feature. To factor it in is to miss everything that Jesus is, and Jesus suffered, and the door that Jesus is to salvation.

'By good works, no one will be justified in his sight.'
(Romans 3:20)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/god-owes-me>



LET SAIL

Some of the most powerful movies are the ones where the boat was missed. Not accidentally, however. It's when the hero set out to catch that boat to the new world, new opportunities, fortunes, adventures, and has said all his goodbyes. But then he stops. He considers. He lets the ship sail without him.

Paul writes to the Romans, to the Gentiles, and to us today, ***'Although they knew God... they exchanged the glory of the immortal God...'*** (Romans 1:21-23)

All of us have sailed away from our soul's true home. God calls each of us back, to come home, through the '*door*' of Jesus Christ. (John 10:9)

'I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...' (Revelation 3:20)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/let-sail>



NEW YOU

Does something haunt you in your past? Maybe something done to you, or maybe something you've done? Does the future look bleak - even an eternal one, a heavenly one - because this hurt will always 'have been'?

Despair creeps over the soul like a mist, and not even death and destruction can rewrite history... Or can it?

Now listen to this story - the most important one you will ever hear - and consider:

God made you. He made you in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and this is a powerful responsibility. Like Lucifer, we have used our God-image and capacities to rebel against God, to reject him, to compete with him. We have God-like power for destruction, for evil. Maybe *this* is all too clear to you.

Now here is where we need to heed. Really look and listen to this truth: ***God put a rescue plan in action, that would satisfy the soul...***

So here we stand, in pools of our own blood and that of others. We are destroyed. It is here that God puts his own glory aside (Phil 2:6-7), after hundreds of years '*foreshadowing*' and '*foretelling*' this moment (Is 7:14; 9:1-7; Is 53). He '*becomes nothing*', becomes one of us. What happens here is the only thing we would accept from a God we blame. He allows us to beat and kill him, to get all our anger out on him, to hate and betray and mock him. He allows us to pour out all the hell in our souls over him like a drink offering.

And here he takes us even deeper. He takes this 'sin' on himself and '*becomes sin for us*'. (2 Cor 5:21) He takes death into himself, and dies with it - like any hero who has to sacrifice himself to defeat the enemy.

So our sin is *on* him, and death *in* him, and death itself dies with him. (1 Cor 15:54-58)

Then Jesus rises from the dead - ***'the firstborn from among the dead'***. (Col 1:15-20) He comes back to you and me, his killers. In fact, he uses his blood, the blood we spilt, to buy us back. (Rev 5:9) And with his defeat over death and all sin of all time, he offers to give us - to create in us - ***'a new heart and new spirit.'*** (Ez 36:26)

He offers you not only a new future, but a new past. It is a bloody affair, God's blood on our hands, but it is a God-sized, spiritual truth: to write you a new future, and write you a pure past. Call on him.

'Come, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them white as snow.'
(Isaiah 1:18)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/new-you>



REDRAWN LINES

Most lines and boundaries in our lives are drawn in our own heads. Who likes who, where trust starts and stops, what groups exist and don't exist, loyalty lines, legacies...

Paul (author of 12 of the New Testament books of the Bible), opens our eyes to the deeper 'lines' of life's realities. He writes,

'We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' (Ephesians 6:12)

That is a significant empire of spirit world right there! Rulers, authorities, powers, evil... Jesus himself addressed this kingdom of darkness when he said, ***'The prince of this dark world stands defeated.'*** (John 16:11) Prince? Again, we see power structures.

This spirit world is not one to obsess about, but is real, and is far bigger, more complex and more populated than our own temporal and physical world. Another fascinating scripture about seeing behind the 'seen', is when Elijah opens the eyes of his servant to see the real forces that surround them. (2 Kings 6:8-23)

Interestingly, our own lives as followers of Christ are ***'on display to the heavenly bodies'***. (Ephesians 3:10)

So what really drives us when we act and respond or anticipate situations? What structures and realities are we believing, referencing, deferring to? What princes are we bowing to, norms following, values navigating, deities honoring?

Jesus said, ***'Anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice, is like a wise man who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did***

not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.'
(Matthew 7:24-25)

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THE LEVELER

'He brings one down, he exalts another.'

(Psalm 75:7)

God is a Leveler. The good news is, his level is always higher than yours or mine, and truer. So when God brings you down, he brings you up. When he brings you up, he brings you up. It is always up with God, like it is always 'Yes!' in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

In God and Christ the pursuit, the purpose, is always God, always Christ. He is the reward, and he is eternal life. (John 17:3) This is beyond our minds, and beyond our hearts and appetite. It is so spiritual it is *other*, a complete upstream walk. We prefer to see the purposes of God in our lives to be an outworking in our earthly lives, like healing, provision and peace.

It is true - and great news - that God pours himself out on our earthly lives, and answers our calls (Psalm 118:21); but it is helpful - and important - to remember, to really see and believe, that heaven itself, like earth, is from the word of God, and sustained by the word of God. (Heb 1:3; Col 1:16-17)

To know God, to hold Christ, is to go through the '*door*' of life. (John 10:9) Life *is* Christ, and *in* Christ. It is an all-consuming, spiritual truth.

Now the course of distaste of stepping out of earthly values and pursuits into the heavenly realm, is the same course as its reward. The cross marks the spot not only of a crucifixion, but of a resurrection. The darkest point as access to the brightest arrival. Jesus constantly challenged our hold to the earthly, and its hold on us, and he did and will let us 'walk away sad.'
(Matthew 19:22)

If the Lord is moving in your life today, and it feels like he brings you down and exalts another, let go and rise in his spirit. This is a lifting, a raising up, an eternal positioning and healing.

'Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and he will lift you up in due time.' (1 Peter 5:6)

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(BE)LIEVE

As a language major, I can confirm that the 'be' in 'believe' is *not* etymologically semantic! But, as an embedded part of this English word, it helps illustrate a scriptural and spiritual truth in all languages, for all ages.

From Genesis to Revelation - and in love and life - where there is no 'belief' (in what is seen or not seen), there is no experience of what is - there is no 'being'. You may have love, but not believe you do, and therefore do not experience it. Belief is a powerful thing.

There was a time when God was seen and touched and walked with mankind *'in the cool of the day.'* (Gen 3:8) ***What was true was seen, and what was seen was true.*** Then through belief in the words of the serpent, we laid claim to a lie. We walked through a door to death, and no longer could trust our eyes, our minds or even our heart. (1 John 3:20)

For a long time, there was no door back to Eden. But then God, expressed himself into man (Phil 2:7), spilled his blood and with it carved out a door and carved our names on it. (John 10:9; Isaiah 49:16) He now calls us to believe a new report, to believe him as we believed - and often continue to believe - the serpent. Through faith in what the eyes of our heart now see, Jesus Christ, we can truly 'be' again.

'Whoever loses their life for me... will save it.'

(Mark 8:35)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/believe>



POSITIVE TYRANNY

Being positive can be a great thing, like bringing the sunshine on a rainy day. Thank you, positive people! Now, wading out into a little deeper waters...

'Positive', literally, indicates position and direction, not necessarily good or bad. So, you can be positively 'positive', but you can also be positively negative - i.e. genuinely negative. We don't use the word in this literal form much, these days, but sometimes there is a dividing line between our idiomatic use, and truth.

The story that jumps to my mind is when a rich (positive?), young (positive?), ruler (positive?), approached a spiritual leader for advice (positive?). So he comes to Jesus, and asks how he can peg on to all this positivity (wait for it... drum roll...) **eternal life**? Wow, all-good goes spiritual and just keeps on going...

Here the positive meets truth. And at this juncture it looks a lot like the negative meeting truth. Jesus pinpoints that in this young man's life, God was not his first love, per the **'most important command'**. (Mt 22:36-40)

Jesus prescribes for this particular case, a dose of selling all he owned, giving all to the poor, and following Jesus in life. Scripture tells us that this positive man turned and **'went away sad...'** (Mark 10:22)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/positive-tyranny>



MARTYR COMPLEX

There is so much pain in life - just in our personal lives and inner circles. Then we also have the pain of the world, flooding to and through our minds and homes through the news and social media.

With so much need and inequity just down the street, and across the globe, how can we find peace and capacity to enjoy even a quiet place, a safe moment, a comforting, hot beverage? There is always someone else in arm's reach who needs it more...

We carry guilt. We do. Something in us knows guilt cannot rule, but cannot - should not - either be dispelled completely. We need our peace and provision, but we also need our souls to be intact, to feel for others.

Two insights for us from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a **'man of sorrows'** (Is 53:4), but he was a man of great peace. He **'stayed his mind on the Lord'** (Is 26:3), and kept in step with the Father. (John 5:19; Gal 5:25) One moment that impacts me - liberates me - was when Jesus was overcome with **'compassion'** for the needs of people around him, seeing and feeling that they were **'helpless and harassed'** and **'sheep without a shepherd.'** (Mt 9:36) And in this moment of intense emotion Jesus turns to his disciples and rather than admonishing them to action, he directs their attention to the Father. He says, **'Pray, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers.'**

This upward focus is essential, and always the calibrator of our lateral focus. Remember, Jesus told us the most important commandment was to love God, and secondly to love others. Our love for self and others will come to and through us - with perfect peace - as we hold God as our first love and focus.

Secondly, God lives in perfect peace even with disparities in this life, and complete disparity in the afterlife (Heaven/Hell). This is not sanction for 'denial' or turning a blind eye to the pains and needs of our generation, but it does tell us that there is a place of spiritual peace that runs deep, is eternal, is available to us, and is beyond our '*understanding*'. (Phil 4:6-7)

Do you want this peace? Do you want to be able to know peace, even in a storm, or amidst poverty and brokenness? This is where we need God, through Jesus, to open a road before us, and begin to pour into us, work into us (cf Mk 8:22-26), a new heart and new spirit. (Ez 36:26) This is a road with increasing light and increasing experience. (cf Pr 4:18) This is a process, and God's way. He calls us to believe and walk and seek and sacrifice and '***strive to enter that rest***'. (Heb 4:11)

It is not a good-works road, but a faith-work road. It is real, and completely rewarding. God, through his Word, will often give the identity, the name, at the end of living that name. (Rev 2:17)

Onward, soldier of redemption, and keep your eyes on the prize always! (cf Heb 12:2; Isaiah 26:3)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/martyr-complex>



FEARLESS

Jesus hated evil. (Psalm 22; 5:5) But Jesus did not fear evil.

This is a key, powerful truth embedded in the spirit and gospel of Jesus Christ. This is '*upside down*' reality, kingdom of God vs. kingdom of the devil. Jesus did say,

'The prince of this world stands defeated.'

(John 16:11)

Jesus confronted evil and darkness, and asked that it be taken from him (Mt 26:39), admonished us to do the same (Mt 24:20), and the apostles did also. (2 Thes 3:2) To hate evil and walk against it, is a good thing, a holy thing, and honors God. I love Psalm 94:16 where we see a 'warring' spirit of God against darkness, and a challenging call to us:

'Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?'

We are told that perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:18) Jesus brought peace into every storm - every time saying, '*Peace be with you!*' or '*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*' (John 14:1) Sometimes people were afraid of something else, and he spoke peace to them. Sometimes they were afraid of him. (Mt 14:22-33) His peace is different. (John 14:27) He brings it sometimes and quells the storm with it, and other times he brings it and wants us to stand, to see him, to know peace in the storm. (John 16:33)

Rage against the darkness in the power of the spirit (Ps 94:16), but honor God by casting out the fear. (Ps 11:1; Is 12:2; Ps 23:4)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/fearless>



LILO

I lived on ships for 4 years as a kid. That's another story. But let me say this, the image for me where water meets sky is all things: both terrifying (*did you know the deepest part of the ocean is 7 miles down?*), and exhilarating!

I imagine floating on top of crystal clear waters, glass smooth surface, waters 100 or 1000 miles deep, as deep as the sky is high. These waters *are* the sky, the sky breathed into being. Like the air's breath on a cold morning, air seen.

I think of God 'speaking' life into being, his breath breathing water into waves. This is how the Bible opens, Genesis chapter 1. And then throughout the Scriptures and the years (and authors and genres of writing and prophecies), this same God maintains that he sustains physical life by his spirit. God claims his identity as simple and pure being (Exodus 3:14), and **'sustains all things by his powerful word.'** (Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus - God's Word expressed in flesh (John 1:14) - said his words were **'spirit and life'** (John 6:63), and we are told that **'without him nothing was made that has been made.'** (John 1:1-5) Jesus himself tells us that **'God is spirit'**, and he wants worshipers in **'spirit and truth'**. (John 4:24)

Heaven - like earth - will always be *'sustained by his powerful word'*, and for this reason we need to rest, relax, let go and let God hold life in the palm of his hand, like a feather in the wind, like a lilo on a bottomless sky.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/lilo>



#58 (posted 10/26/15)

WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THAT?

We live in an age where we're all right all the time. Your opinion is as valid as my opinion, and they may be polar opposites. We think this is '*avant guard*' or a sign of our progression as a people. Relative. Subjective. Post-Modern.

And yet so profoundly pre-evolutionary. Don't all animals think they are the right one? Doesn't every toddler think they are the right one? Oh, but we 'agree to disagree.' Really, do we? I think we agree to hate tacitly, subvert holistically, abuse shrewdly, betray secretly.

I'm a teacher and today we had parent-teacher meetings. Oh my, what an eye opener! To self, primarily. I am also a parent... and have been the child of 'advocating parents'... Oh my.

One verse that comes to my mind today is about my 'advocating' to God about my life. Proverbs 19:3 states,

'A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD.'

I have often gone to God, walked into his courts, completely overlooked his voice, his word, his ways, and completely overlooked my own choices, values and actions, and raged at *him*. I have an issue with God (who I think he is), and I have a powerful case and cause (for who I think I am).

Secondly, this verse challenges me this day, and I have seen its workings: ***'... a gentle answer breaks bones.'***
(Proverbs 25:15)

The most powerful moments and breakthroughs in my life, were never persuasive rationally. I have memories of tones, touch, quietness, forgiveness, even people allowing themselves to be broken by my wrongdoing.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-do-you-understand-by-that>



YOU WILL EMERGE

We say time is a healer. But in this respect time can also be a destroyer. We need to go deeper.

Time serves the healing process and power well, this is true. Where healing is at work, time passing is progress. But what is this healing power? Today you sit shattered, a broken heart, gasping for air. Will I emerge from this pain?

A couple verses come to me in this place of spilt blood and mist of terror. Psalm 34:18 says,

'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.'

God is not far from the broken, the rejected, or even the mocked and crucified. In fact, the lower you go and the lower you are, the closer you can be to Christ, *'fellowshipping with him in his sufferings.'* (Phil 3:10)

His kingdom is upside down, giving preference of faith to the poor (James 2:5), preference of honor to the despised (Mark 14:1-11), preference of revelation to the persevering, weeping. (John 20:11-18)

Secondly, the prophet Ezekiel cries out God's heart and mission to us all, ***'He will give you a new heart, and a new spirit!'*** (Ez 36:26) The appearance, death and resurrection story and spirit of Jesus Christ is so that we, too, can stand firm in pain, sorrow and even sin-stained clothing, and experience a new self emerge. This is God's story and promise to each one of us.

Jesus said, ***'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.'*** (John 11:25-26)

There is a *'blood that speaks a better word'* (Heb 12:24), which will pour over and into your broken heart, and give new life in and through your veins. You will emerge healed. You will emerge whole.

Cry out to Jesus today in faith, and time will serve his healing purposes in you.

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/you-will-emerge>



STICKS AND STONES...

Words wound and heal. A famous proverb reads, '**The tongue has the power of life and death...**' (Pr 18:21)

Words originate and formulate in the heart and mind - and far more than ever come out the mouth. Words - or thoughts and judgments - saturate the 'spirit waves' of our lives, relationships, generations. There is a 'report' over your life all the time by others, by spirit powers (Eph 6; Rev 12:10), by your own heart. (1 John 3:20)

I recently had a conversation with an upset man. Two things occurred to me while talking to him. First, anything I say will be heard as an affront, and will be used against me. *Everything!* It was a very upsetting experience.

Secondly, I saw - and felt - that I had been this person to others. Proverbs 27:4 says, '**Anger is cruel...**' And I have been cruel through anger to many.

Scripture tells us of 2 very critical and powerful - and opposite - reports that are over our lives. Both are true. But one is truer. We lay claim to this truer report only through faith, and only justified to do so by the blood of Jesus.

The devil '*accuses*' us of our sin, and he does this before God 24/7. (Rev 2:10) The devil is a liar, but he also is an accuser, laying claim to our wrongs and highlighting them. Such is the force of this kind of dark and incriminating 'truth'. The most powerful false reports, are 'true' reports that are void of love, and void of God's *higher* report. Your parent, or boyfriend, for example, may have spoken words to you that were 'true', but so false.

Let's consider how God speaks a *truer* report, than the 'truth' of our wrongdoing. First, it is important to understand that he 'bought' the right to do this, by becoming our 'wrong', becoming our 'sin', and dying with it on the cross. (2 Cor 5:21) Our wrongs are true, but have lost their power, because they are debts that have already been paid. This leaves us with a new report, a new start, a new name.

There are many and exciting scriptures that capture this 'gospel' message, but I want to fast forward and plumb deep to the 'individual' report that God speaks to *just* you.

Jesus tells us that his sheep know his voice (John 10:27), and Jesus himself speaks to the individual and says that if and when we persevere in our faith walk with him, he will give us a new and 'secret' name, that is known only to the individual and God. (Rev 2:17)

This name, therefore, is safe and untouchable by the accuser - and by any other mortal, and even by your own heart's '*condemnation*'. (1 John 3:20)

I love this story in Scripture and leave you with this: Elijah, when waiting on the voice and word from God, he heard the rip and roar of winds that split rocks and mountains, but the Lord was not in the wind. He heard, saw and felt other powerful expressions of 'truth' and reality, but the Lord was not in them. Then he heard a whisper, and he knew this to be the voice of the Lord. (1 Kings 19:11-13)

Much of our walk in peace with God is to know his whisper - and to acknowledge the power and authority of this whisper - over the loud, powerful, persuasive other reports that simply are not the voice of God to you in this moment.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/sticks-and-stones>



FREEDOM TO FORGET

This is hard for me. We say, '*Forgive and Forget*', but we struggle to forgive, and we really struggle to forget. Really struggle!

It is interesting how we genuinely forget wrongs we've done to others. But with offenses done to us, we freeze the frame and use it as a lens filter for all dealings with that person going forward. This is, actually, understandable. We were not made to be offended, to carry hurt. So to 'remember' offense, is natural.

There are some hurts in life that rank with Christ's suffering. Know this, and be free to own this. Paul in Philippians 3 looks to '*fellowship with Christ in his suffering*'. Some of you have a very special place in the courts of God, when you bring what you have suffered and simply sit with Jesus in his suffering, in his loneliness, where the rest of us abandoned him. (Mt 26:43) God will exalt you, and heal you, honor and reward you for this faith. (Mt 20:16)

There are other hurts, lesser ones. These are ones that God has given us the right to 'forget'. I say 'right', because I think there is a part of us that feels we owe it to ourselves, maybe to others, to *not* forget, to not let go. We feel to 'forget' is to surrender under abuse that we should not, to lose a grip on our very selves. But actually, God has made a way for us to be hurt, even 'crucified', to lose battles, so to speak, but to win the war!

Because of what Jesus did - taking all sin on himself, and taking it to the grave - he has created a 'being' for us that is no longer defined by what we do, nor what is done to us. Paul writes, '***I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live...***' (Gal 2:20) Paul also tells us that our lives are now '***hidden with Christ in God.***' (Col 3:3)

In Jesus, we can truly let go of any offense done to us, and in doing so - in forgetting their sin the way God has forgotten our sin - we draw nearer to Christ, and we draw nearer to our truest, newest self in Christ. (Ps 103:12; Mt 6:9-13)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/freedom-to-forget>



FAITH IS A VERB

Have you ever told someone to believe in him/herself?

You are looking at their eyes, their fear, their sense of self in a situation, and you know - you know absolutely - they don't see and feel in that moment what they ought, what is real. You tell them at that moment that they really need to believe what you say, to lay claim to the truth about themselves, to shake off feelings of doubt, of insecurity... And you are right!

How about the flip side - ever told someone (or just seen and noted) that they are not who they think they are? Someone basing 'self' on perceptions and perspectives that are not true, just not real?

The Bible tells us a story about a God who created life, the earth beneath and the people on it. Then it lays out the truth about who this God is, and who people truly are, and what lies within, what is true without, and where it has come from, where it is going. We come to this 'report' with different languages, different experiences, different perspectives, different feelings.

Day in, day out, our experiences change, our feelings about 'self' and others change, our fears ebb and flow. It is here we so desperately need that '*anchor*' (Heb 6:19-21), that '*door*' (John 10:9), that safe place (Col 3:3), that healing touch (Is 1:18), that future (Jn 11:25-26), that true, new, pure, safe and '*secret name*'. (Rev 2:17)

'We take captive every thought and make it subject to Christ...' (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faith-is-a-verb>



PURPOSE BURDEN

We were never made to seek out purpose in this life. This is a critical truth to hold in one's vision. It is not a necessary evil, exactly, but a result of evil. It is a mountain we now have to climb, because we fell off a mountain we were never meant to fall off.

Take a minute here to think about the story of Adam and Eve in this light. They were made with a pure and holy capacity of mind and body to match and enjoy a paradise environment. It was a perfect fit. No guilt, no mortality, no sense of loss or insecurity or sense of pressing urgency to have lived before they die. Purpose of life was in the fabric, the blood, the spirit of life itself, and God moved in relationship with them. (Genesis 1-3:8)

It is beyond 'interesting' to me that a pursuit of '*knowledge*' was the portal of destruction. Not just any 'knowing', but knowledge with a purpose of trespassing on God's domain, to '*become like god*', against God's express command. (Gen 3:5) The Fall from paradise was through this door of mutiny, turning our created state against the Creator himself, and so severing our lifeline.

So now, as 'gods' of this world, we seek for purpose.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved...' (John 10:9)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/purpose-burden>



CAN'T SHAKE IT!

We can see, touch, believe and declare, and yet still not *feel*. Ever experienced this?

For example, that blue-sky, sunny day, but the blue in you is different? All the facts stack to support a light-hearted and hopeful spirit, but a heaviness weighs down, or even fear, or terror or despair.

A couple Scriptures come to me on this topic. One is about the man who brought his son to Jesus to heal him. He obviously believed Jesus could, or he would not have come. Correct? His actions were a statement of faith. But when he came to Jesus, he said, ***'If you can do anything... help us.'*** Jesus challenged him in this, and said, ***'If you can?' All things are possible to those who believe.'*** (Mark 9:23)

In this, Jesus put the spotlight back on the man, in front of the people, and wanted to know what his beliefs were about this person (Christ), this power to heal, this faith. The man blurted out his truest feelings, which were so validating of what Jesus was touching on here: ***'I do believe! Help me in my unbelief!'*** (Mark 9:24) Jesus healed his son.

David, the king and the worshiper, writes in Psalm 86:1,4, ***'I am poor and needy... Give your servant joy.'*** I love this humility, and validation of my own struggles at times. I need God to give me joy, even in good circumstances.

That sun can be shining, and facts and figures healthy, and yet I still need the 'floor', the power, the voice of God that *'breaks cedars'*, that *'twists oaks'* (Ps 29), to speak true joy into my soul.

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/cant-shake-it>



THE DEVIL FINALLY CAME TO MEET ME...

I was ready, it is true. A smile crept over my face in the dark because I already knew the outcome of this. In fact, I had known it all along, for years, since infancy. But the fortress I had been given, I had dismantled, destroyed, and when I came to my senses I had to sit in the wind and the cold - where walls once had been, and I knew walls would be again.

Because I had come back into the ruins, and taken a stand where my inheritance once stood and would stand again, the winds blew hard. For years. But over time I did see walls emerge. It was more to do with my sight than with the walls. The gravestones of regret were crystal clear, I could discern these physically. But *'the blood that speaks a better word'*, the one that spills slowly and stains permanently and drips from a hand cut up with my initials, this covering I had to hold fast in my spirit, my soul, by faith, to be seen one day.

I was not deterred. Every fight to displace me, I fought hard. I was told day in and day out that I had no right to be here, no proof of purchase. I shook my head. My own heart spoke against me. I was mocked as completely irrelevant, slightly mad, slightly evil. I stood my ground.

Like any force of darkness that is not yielded to, it cannot help but show its face, and so face its own destruction. First he tries to push you from the light, then he eventually attacks the light, and this is like kindling attacking fire. When dark turns to touch light, darkness is gone.

'The prince of this world stands defeated.'

(John 16:11)

(Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Timothy 3:15; Proverbs 18:10; Matthew 5:13; Revelation 21:5; Matthew 14:22-33; Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 6:23; Heb 12:24; 1 John 3:20; John 10:20; Isaiah 49:16; 1 Timothy 6:12; Philippians 3:12-14; Psalm 73:25-26; James 4:7-8; Rev 12:10-11)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-devil-finally-came-to-meet-me>



I REFUSED HEAVEN

One of the hardest things for me in my faith here and now, is actually receiving God's gift of peace.

Jesus stands and holds it out to me. I see it as clear as day. I see it clearer than day. It is more true to me than the winds of hell around it.

Peter saw Christ on the water and walked to him. As he neared him, his doubt increased. When he was in arm's reach of him, his doubt overcame him, literally 'sank' him. (Matt 14:22-33)

Proximity to Christ can be darker, not clearer. Winds of truth howl as we near him, and some of these winds - most of these winds - are the ones that blew through us in the beginning of time; the ones that blew us to reject God's word, his paradise, and walk out the door of Eden into death itself. (Gen 3:5-6) ***We knew the truth, and walked against it, eyes wide open.***

Why do you think when you 'near' Christ, or see him face to face, that you will receive him?

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/i-refused-heaven>



#67 (posted 11/7/15)

WHAT IF GOD...

Have you ever not believed something or someone or both, and been wrong in your unbelief? Has anyone not believed you, and been wrong?

What if God was actually separate to you - how would you come to know him?

You don't believe in God (or don't know)... well, what if you could create a God for the world; what would you want him to fix?

Would you be angry at this God for all the pain in the world?

Would you blame him? If so, how does your blame/anger usually play out towards someone?

What if this God of yours made an appearance to you, would you love or hate him?

Would you attribute creation to this God? If not, why not? Does he not have power for this?

If your God is 'good', then how do you explain evil? Is it a creation of man's mind? What does this say about man's mind, and where does this thinking come from?

If evil does exist, but is not man's and is not God's, whose is it? And what is it in man that subscribes to it?

What would your God say about past wrongs? Does he/she/it/you have a story to address the past, to right wrongs? Or will wrongs done forever define you and others?

If your God was actually separate to you - how would you come to know him?

'God in his wisdom, made it so that man in his wisdom, would not find God.' (1 Corinthians 1:20)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-if-god>



FREEDOM UNFATHOMABLE

I've been reading through the book of Psalms of late.

So much has poured over my soul in the first few Psalms, but one motif that runs through them all, that has struck me most powerfully, is the *freedom* God gives.

As I read and reflect, it is an uncontainable truth, and almost too much for me to bear. You have to remember, although we claim we want freedom, it's a bit like Olaf wanting the summer and the sun: we don't know what we are talking about!

But in and through the Psalms (and the whole message of the Bible), God reports to us about *true freedom*, and offers it to us by his spirit.

Jesus said to the people, and to us, ***'My words are spirit and they are life.'*** (John 6:63) Jesus also cautioned the pedantic Nicodemus that to know the truth is like being caught up by the wind (John 8:3), that it would blow us, and through us, in an untraceable way.

Jesus also cautioned - but thrilled us - with the promise that to know him, to *'believe in him'*, would tap a source of *'living water'* that would not only flow over us, but *'from within us.'* (John 7:37-38) Jesus said that to know him was, in essence, *'eternal life'*. (John 17:3) He said to believe in him was to defy death now and forevermore. (John 11:25- 26)

So against this backdrop of Christ, and his life that embodied the Word of God (John 1:14), reading through the Psalms I see this powerful, spirit word and truth, as paradoxical as the Trinity. Jesus cried out on the cross, asking God to defend him (Psalm 31:5b), and as his spirit trickled away, in a picture of death, we see that God did ultimately defend him (Psalm 31:8), and with him, us.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/freedom-unfathomable>



THE DEVIL'S GOT YOU ON COHERENCE!

When my pride is hurt - been a coward, or been forgotten? - I fall and can't get up. Why is this? What is it that I am trying to reconcile or heal in order to stand again? Sometimes I find myself reworking or rewording the scenario, over and over in my head, trying to rewrite history, or find a footing somewhere in my soul to justify a rising up...

What holds me down? Why can't I shake this and stand?

The insult or the failure are not the problem. What holds me down is to do with *what* the insult or the failure holds to - the 'I', the sense of self, the 'Me'.

What if the essence of my truest self had nothing to do with my sense of self, but Another's report? What if my hold on self was nothing to do with the true me, but rather the true me was Another's hold on me? If I could be truly free of 'me' - the 'me' to which pride and cowardice stick to - I would be free of pride and cowardice. They would have nothing to hold to.

What if I was free of me? Free to truly be?

'I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'
(Galatians 2:20)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-devils-got-you-on-coherence>



HOW GOD WORKS

It was this line in Psalm 2 that got me thinking on this today. God says, **'Ask me and I will give you the nations.'** (vs.8) God is asking us to ask him for something he wants to give us.

Let's delve straight into our musing, here... So God did make mankind, and we are told at the outset that he made us *'in his image'*. (Genesis 1:27) Something of God is breathed out and into mankind. You. Me. Jesus reminded his own haters about this in John 10:34, **'In your own scriptures it is written, 'You are all sons of god...''** (quoting Psalm 82:6)

So God has made us in his own image - much like your child is made in your image, and/or you are in the image of your parents.

As a parent there is often times that I want something for my child, but I want my child to *want* it. Not only do I want him/her to want it, I want it to be so present in their values and purposes, that they come and *ask* me for it. If, for example, my son comes and asks me to give him advice about some struggle, and to pray with him, he is asking me for something I have wanted to give him - but have not. Why? Because without his asking, what I would be giving would not be received or real.

The spirit of truth in the connection, the counsel, the faith, the support, would not be consummated in spirit and truth, would not be my son's, without his asking.

Jesus said, **'My words are spirit and they are life.'** (John 6:63) He also told us that **'God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit...'** (John 4:24) Jesus, breathed forth in and of God, prayed to the Father, and only did what he saw the Father do. (John 5:19) And in the same 'spirit' and mystery of life and love and God and relationship, God asks us to ask him for what he wants to give us.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/how-god-works>



TERMINAL CALLED TERMINAL

We're all gonna check in and out at the terminal called *Terminal*.

Yes, we are. Some of us will fall in and out in the same minute - quick as a plane falling out of the sky. Others will see this terminal from far out, and far too soon, and make a steady and slow approach to and through it.

There's no silver lining where not even the cloud is discernible, and the fact is, death is a humbling, dark mystery, that comes back and grabs even those that claim to come back from it. There will come a time you don't come back. Not long after that a time will come when no one seeks to call you back from the shadows, for they, too, will be there... We fall into death and darkness like rain falls into the raging and dark ocean. A deafening, consuming, annihilating termination.

I feel the sting of the 'terminal' every time. There is something about seeing this terminal and facing into it. Here's my consolation: *We were never meant to!*

The reason we tremble at this terminal is because we were not made to go through it. We quake - and if we don't, we should - because it is a reality that was spawned from mankind's dark rebellion against God. Death is the picture, the face, of our rebellion and sin. We read about this in the first 3 chapters of the Bible, and the rest of Bible sets out to deal with it.

It is against the backdrop of this 'reality' that the story and message of Jesus Christ is so powerful! He comes to us, even in our grief and loss of others, and lifts our chin, lifts our eyes to his, and says, ***'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.'*** (John 11:25-26)

Paul writes of Jesus' victory over death - and quoting Isaiah 25:8 - ***'Death, where is your sting?'***

(1 Corinthians 15:55)

Have you walked through the door of Jesus Christ (John 10:9), so that your passage through *Terminal* will come out to ***life eternal?***

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/terminal-called-terminal>



CONCLUSION

The fact that we as humans have an experience, a consciousness, an awareness of the 'unfathomable'... well, that's unfathomable!

It is like an awareness of an expansiveness that we can't get our awareness around. It just goes on and on... and we are aware of this.

We gaze at the stars till our gaze curves off into watery eyes, and we turn and walk back into the house. Our sight reached no end point, and yet knowing it would not, it could not, we left eternity hanging in our hearts and minds and went about the evening...

What does this point to? Well, who can say, you might say. Well, only the One that sees, that is true. If only one man could see the pointer on a compass in a multitude of men, only he could say that he sees what it points to - but everyone could, if they wished, believe him and conclude not only the same thing, but the *right* thing. They don't see, but they conclude correctly.

Jesus said, '*Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.*'

(John 10:37-38)

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RECOGNITION

I have a memory of a state of mind. Well, if I'm honest, it was a state of soul.

I was so checked out, about 5 years old, that when the youth group leader was calling my name in the quiet group of about 50 kids, I did not even hear him. It was when all eyes were on me, and a few sitting near me shook me and called my name, that I snapped out of it. Where was I? I know exactly where I was, and have in some respects been there since.

Solomon writes, '**God has put eternity in the hearts of men.**' (Eccl 3:11)

Eternity is a place, an expanse that has no limit of space or time. Once there, always there. What do we see there? Well, we see this life on earth from the outside. We see its short sprint, its flare and its smoke and its dissipation. We see that one is only what one is, and no amount of man-made recognition or even personal experience can touch the soul's value, the mortal destiny.

One sees that *Another* has the only say on one's life, not even one's own heart. This is an eternal space, and it can be heaven or hell.

There is a time for everything (also Ecclesiastes), and this includes a time to reach for a rope in dark and deafening waters. It is against the backdrop of this surge of the power, the essence, the truth about life and death, light and darkness, that the call and invitation of Jesus Christ '*cuts to pieces*' or '*crushes*'. (Luke 20:17-18)

Jesus said, '**I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.**' (John 10:9)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/recognition>



NATURE OR NURTURE?

I am Christian. My parents were Christians and instructed me in this faith. Because 'religion' was the career of my parents, the questions/comments were swirling from a young age: *You only believe in Christ because your parents do, because this is what you were taught... If you were born elsewhere, to others...*

I agree wholeheartedly. Paul writes in Romans, **'How will they hear, unless someone preaches to them?'** (Romans 10:14) And in my case, it was my parents.

But let me tell you about the 'other' I might have been, for the same reasons of both nature and nurture: I would be a terrorist today. Had I been brought up there, under that teaching, under those role models and values and pressures, I would be a killer. Through one man's teaching, my nature was nurtured towards faith in Christ. Through another's, my nature is nurtured towards murder.

The nature is in there. What we nurture does matter.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/nature-or-nurture>



COMPLETE PEACE WITH GOD

Life has temptations on all sides, all day long. *It is exhausting!* Temptation pounds like waves against rocks, flies like sharp debris in a hurricane, races like rage trying to cut us off...

Can you close your eyes and imagine having complete peace with God?

There was a woman once, who had a past. This woman took a jar of expensive perfume, everything of value that she owned, and came to Jesus, and poured this perfume over his head in an act of worship and sacrifice.

Jesus' own disciples - the good guys, the inner circle - judged her, were *'indignant'* towards her, criticized her openly. But Jesus defended her. Jesus defended her worship, her touch, and said that what she had done - bringing her hurt, her hope, her love to Jesus - would be bound up in the message of Jesus himself, that her name would be one with his. (Mark 14:1-11)

Do you want your past to be in the past, and to be made one with Jesus?

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FIGHT FEAR - NOT WHAT YOU FEAR

After a terrorist attack in London, Bono turned his song into a prayer, asking that we would not become a monster to defeat a monster.*

We become what we fear. We become angrier at our father than he ever was at us; we become more violent in mind and heart towards the bully than he ever was towards us. We hate our haters more. And then the ultimate blow is our self-loathing, when we see that our deepest driver is our fear, our cowardice. We hate ourselves for fearing.

Jesus comforted us in our fear, but also admonished us not to fear. He turned our attention from fearing man - **'who can kill the body and do no more...'** - to fearing God, who can completely destroy even the soul. (Luke 12:4-5)

To fear God more - God's way - is to release us from fear of man, and breaks peace over our soul like a soothing ointment. Christ's way to defeat death, was in being meek - not weak. The grave could not contain this power.

I always wondered at the scripture that says, **'Perfect love drives out fear.'** (1 John 4:18) I now feel it is to not only release us from the darkness of what we fear, but to love others by not fixating on, becoming that darkness.

'The meek will inherit the earth, and enjoy peace and prosperity.' (Psalm 34:11)

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.'
(Jesus, Matthew 5:5)

*Miss Sarajevo, U2, live version from London, UK

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/fight-fear-not-what-you-fear>



#77 (posted 11/26/15)

WALKING ON AIR

Life and truth are inherently incongruous on all levels, all the time. We rant about reaching the poor, but somehow have a 'baseline' normal for exactly *our* situation and socio-economic status. This fits right in place, somehow...

His house is too big, and *theirs* far too small and in need, but mine is OK...

I will salt my situation with a little bit of guilt as an out-clause, but not enough to spoil any good time with friends and family. Right?

What's my floor? How can I honestly and truthfully stand and walk in this disparate world? How can I live at peace with so much guilt in my past and even in my present? I cannot trust my own feelings and thoughts because I might be feeling and thinking wrongly. Right?

Right!

But here's not only the good news, but the great news! Spirit news! Truth - in order to cut through inherent disparities, anomalies, flat out contradictions and real and solid accusations - is going to have to be spirit. It is going to have to by-pass the solid and blow like wind.

Here's the door, and here's the spirit pathway to all peace, for all eternity: Jesus said, ***'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.'*** (John 10:9).

Jesus also said that his words were the only thing that true words could be: ***'spirit and life'***. (John 6:63)

Jesus also said that to be ***'born of the spirit'*** is as free, unpredictable, and expansive as being the *'wind'*. (John 3:8)

How do we access this door, these words, this world, this 'justification'? Through faith in Jesus.

(Romans 5:1; Hebrews 11:6)

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/walking-on-air>



FAITH

Faith is for freedom. Freedom from all things dark. Dark deeds done to you. Dark deeds done by you. Dark memories and spirits. Dark dreams and days. Dark and lonely soul and self.

Faith is a mystery. Like life itself, and all the deepest things in life. Faith is a medium. It is God's medium given to mankind, for mankind to take and hold things from God. Spirit things, like forgiveness, joy, peace, and true identity. (Heb 11:1,6)

Jesus said he was a 'door' to salvation. (John 10:9) Faith is how we go through that door. Faith is sometimes one with belief, but not always. One can see, believe, and yet reject. This is where belief and faith divide. Faith is belief in action. Belief off the page.

In this respect faith is much more than belief, as wind is to oxygen, or streams are to water. Faith puts direction on things, actually goes places. To believe and act, is faith. To speak out, is faith.

As children we see and believe. As adults, we have lost our way and our vision of the pure. We no longer see and believe, but must believe in order to see. This is how we hold fast to anything we know is true - like love, honesty, loyalty. We believe, and hold fast, when every other fiber of our being is not believing, pulling us in the opposite direction. This is believing, in order to see.

This is faith towards self and others, and makes for strong families and communities, because it is the core cord of relationship. It is faithfulness, literally and spiritually.

Faith is the essence of relationship with one another, and it is the essence of our relationship with God. It is about seeing and believing, and believing to see more. Faith in God is about holding fast to what He reveals to our hearts, like we hold fast to the promises and paths of one another.

Days do darken, and conflicting reports and promises compete, but faithfulness is a stand on what is truest. Faith - and

faithfulness - reaches for, holds and one day has, all that God gives.

'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain...' (Revelation 21:4)

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BROKEN. BROKEN THROUGH.

The lower you've been (any story, any genre), the greater the triumph. This is not 'a' story, this is '*the*' story. This is the heart beat of any and every victory in life. But it's even deeper than this...

There is a victory 'in' the brokenness. You know this is true. You have glimpsed the 'spirit' in the eyes of the suffering, and seen and known that the only difference between them and you is that they stand closer to the edge of the inevitable eternity.

We all know we stand to lose absolutely everything one day, and the poor in our midst hold that truth clearer in their vision, and stand nearer to its Redeemer. (James 2:5)

The truest of triumphs is in and through brokenness. The ultimate expression, vindication and validation of this, is the triumph of life over death, by falling victim to crucifixion. We are told that Jesus became poor to make us rich. (2 Cor 8:9) And this is what he offers us now: *peace, forgiveness, eternal life.*

'Anyone who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life.' (John 5:24)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/broken-broken-through>



PARENTING

When my first child was about 10 days old, we were living in Donnycarney, Dublin, Ireland. A wet, windy day I was walking him in the stroller and the perennial 'Mrs Bird' - who was older than Methuselah and more enigmatic than Melchizedek - peered over her hedge and said,

'Remember, he's not yours. He is on loan from God, and only for a little while.'

That moment I actually felt a wave of relief come over me. As parents we feel overwhelmed at the challenge of protecting our child from the woes of this world, and yet making them strong, able to face into, overcome...

We do everything we can to protect them, inform them, teach mercy, teach consequence, that some things really do *not* matter, that some things really *do* matter...

And then what when things veer off? I now have 2 teens, and 3 younger than that. It's hard to drive straight! Just today I found myself really pondering the question, *'Who am I parenting for?'* Seriously, what if one's ideals for a child get lost in life? Do you stop parenting? No. So whose cause are you now driving, if not your own?

Ephesians 3:14 reinforces Mrs. Bird's word of advice, and blows a word of caution and freedom through the soul. It says that God is not only our Father, but the one from whom every father derives its name.

My cause as a father is ultimately to shepherd, chaperone, love and guide 'my' child - because my child is not my own. My child is the creation, the offspring, the beloved child of Father God - a gift to and through me, on loan for only a little while.

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LOVE. LIVE.

I got married quite young (for our generation, that is). I was 20, and my wife was 19.

I remember how the idea of getting married was a type of a hiding place for me. It was not just company and intimacy, it was a new purpose, direction, and for lots of life's demands, a legitimate excuse: *'Sorry, I can't, I need to get home to the wife...'*

Truth is, marriage - and kids and friends and fam' - have served me well in life for hiding. For safety. For protection and comfort and peace and rest. Brothers have been there, parents have provided, my wife stood with me, kids smiled and loved.

Love towards me has hidden me. David wrote this of God: ***'You are my hiding place.'*** (Ps 32:7) Jesus pointed us to *'Love God'* as the most important commandment, and when grounded here - truly expended in loving God - Jesus called us to pour it over others. *'The second most important commandment is this, to love your neighbor as yourself.'* (Mt 22:36-40).

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/love-live>



TAKE MORE GROUND!

What are you driving at? Think about it. Go a little deeper now... Aristotle says - first pages of his Ethics - that we are driven by '*happiness*'. **So what makes you happy?**

What is the 'happy' you are striving to build? Is it a big, big house with a big yard and a strong fence...? Well, if it is, what's outside that fence? Have you really built anything other than your own, little hiding place in this dark world? And are you sure the darkness is on the *outside* of that fence?

Jesus said, '***Do not store up for yourself treasure on earth, that moth and dust destroy, and thieves break in and steal.***' (Mt 6:19)

Jesus also said, '***What does it benefit a man, to gain the whole world, and yet forfeit his soul?***' (Mark 8:36)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/take-more-ground>



WHERE ARE YOU ACTUALLY GOING WITH ALL THIS?

Stop to think about it, for 1 minute. I dare you. Zone everyone out, every cent of debt and profit. Dial it all off, till you can only feel and hear your own heartbeat. Now, turn your own self off. Lift your heart to God and ask him if he is, who he is, and are you on course in this life.

'Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to Him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.' (Hebrews 11:6)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/where-are-you-actually-going-with-all-this>



LOSE TO WIN!

I'm not talking about hustling. Or strategically losing battles to win the war. There is a place for this kind of shrewd dealing, but it is still just classic 'dealing', survival and competition.

There is another 'win' - the complete and powerful 'win' - that comes through complete and painful 'loss'. It seems contradictory in terms, because it is.

The paradigm and the power comes through the story and the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Christ found his truest purpose in losing self, so that we might be found. He asked God to save him from this pain (Mt 27:46), but saw a 'joy' up ahead that carried him through. (Heb 12:2) He poured himself out, '**became nothing**' (Phil 2:6), became 'sin' (2 Cor 5:21), so that we might become 'righteousness'. His glory, his accomplishment, was to lose himself to and through us.

We are told that the full mystery of God is revealed in this: '**Christ in you.**' (Col 1:27) So his glory, his destiny, was to fade and disappear into others.

So he lost, and I won. And yet deep down, through the dark corridors of pain and death, Christ also came into his consummated destiny. No one remains in loss. For this reason, Jesus teaches us, to lose ourselves to him (Mk 8:34-38), and to expend ourselves in and through others. (Phil 2:17)

This is the way of Christ, and the trap door to spiritual, eternal freedom.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/lose-to-win>



DISCOURAGEMENT

I was brought up a 'missionary kid', or 'MK', as they say. I saw more of the world by the age of 9 than I've seen since, or will see again. I had already lived on 2 ships at that point, and in the countries of Iran, Belgium, the US and Turkey, and been to and through 49 countries.

Two things move me most powerfully in continuing to make the message of Jesus known. First, I do it because it honors God, and rings out a heavenly song and impact. (Eph 3:10; 2 Cor 2:15)

Secondly, the message and spirit of Jesus brings life to the hurting and discouraged. I see crumbling buildings and crumbling hearts on all sides, all continents, all ages and eras. Jesus Christ is not just a message but a spirit of living hope, and resurrection power.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/discouragement>



#86 (posted 12/9/15)

HEART DEPOSIT

People's approval and rejection *on* the surface, are often the exact opposite *under* the surface.

A friend might write a reference for another friend, but he would not hire him. An employer might resist your values and fire you, but would trust no one more highly with his real treasures.

Judas might betray Jesus with a kiss, but would bet his soul on that same Jesus.

What heart deposit do you really leave with people?

(*John 2:24; 2 John 1:6; John 8:31-32; Luke 12:4-5, 8-9*)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/heart-deposit>



FAITH FLOOR

Getting out of bed is rough! This morning I thought it was Saturday, but no, it is Thursday. I had to reset my sights quickly, with intention, and it really *did* matter.

If I did not plug into Thursday, my 5 kids would not be woken up, nor my wife; and 2 employers and 5 school-kid schedules would have been in disarray. But getting up hurts every morning, every day!

I have to plug in my faith every morning, every day, and it hurts, too. It grates against my mind, my reason.

Often, before I even open my eyes, I recite to myself Psalm 73:25-26, and other verses like Psalm 36:9, Psalm 27:4 and Job 19:25-27. I do this because I know it is true. I have similar disciplines in my mind and heart to stay true in my marriage, honorable online, disciplined in exercise.

These straight lines are hard to walk, and often take much self-talk, reminders and support from others.

It amazes me and comforts me that Jesus called for faith. Jesus himself had to work to see (Mark 8:22-26), and to hear (Mark 7:37), and told us we would be the same. (Isaiah 6:9)

Paul '*strained ahead*' (Phil 3:12-14), and we are told to '*fight*' and '*strive*'. (1 Tim 6:12; Heb 4:11) The prophet '*longs*' and '*yearns*' to see (Isaiah 26:9), and Paul tells us to '***fix our eyes, not on what is seen...***' (2 Cor 4:18) This '*narrow path*', as Jesus said, is the one that is hard to walk but leads to life. The broad and easy road, the one that comes naturally to human nature, is the one that '*many take*' and '*leads to death*'. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faith-floor>



BE STILL

'How 'bout not equating death with stopping...' (Alanis Morissette, 'Thank U')

We fear to slow, and stop. We fear it, because it can be the picture of either the serene, peaceful, or the despairing, deceased.

This morning I was thinking on a famous verse in the Bible. A short verse that I have seen on bookmarks and stickers since I was a kid. It says,

'Be still and know that I am God.' (Psalm 46:10)

Imagine, for a moment, that God is speaking this to you. Right now in the midst of your life, your pressures, your fears. You have questions, but God answers, *'Be still, my child. Rest. I hold you. I see. I know.'*

Also, in this moment, God gently tilts our chin upward, lifts our eyes to his. He not only calls us to be still, but directs our hearts and minds towards himself, ***'...and know that I am God.'***

Today let Christ speak this line to you. Let your questions sail away from your mind, and let God's spirit and presence be the answer. Be still for a moment, and know that he is God.

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/be-still>



HEAVEN

Take one minute and consider.

Heaven is a place where every hurt is healed. Every one. Hurts done to you; and even more comforting, hurts done *by* you. Fear is gone. Danger is no more. People are *'like angels'* and every word and deed is true.

Light is from God himself, brighter than the sun. We are told there is *'no more death, mourning, sorrow or tears.'* New hearts, spirits, and all things *'made new'*.

There is one scar in heaven, however, that remains. It remains so that yours will be forever gone. When John saw Jesus on earth, he said, ***'Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'*** (John 1:29) This same John, caught up into heavenly vision, tells us that he sees this same lamb on the throne, ***'looking as if he had been slain.'***

Jesus called himself our *'friend'*, and he called himself the ***'door'*** to salvation. He invited us to enter through him, through faith, to eternal life. Reach out to Jesus, and let his scar heal yours, now and forevermore.

'If anyone believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within him.' (John 7:38)

(Rev 21:1-5; Rev 22:1-5; Mt 22:30; Ez 36:26; Rev 5:6; John 15:13-15; 10:9)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/heaven7180822>



WORDS

Words matter.

We know it is true, but forget. Words are like bricks that pave our path. Words we speak over ourselves, over others, over our soul. One famous proverb says, ***'The tongue has the power of life and death...'*** (Pr 18:21)

The most important words we speak, are *'true'* words that God has spoken over us. Salvation itself is bound up in this. It is as if words spoken by man touch words spoken by God, and become one.

Words are our *'expressed'* faith, literally. Romans 10:9 writes, ***'If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'***

God himself is described as *'Word'*. (John 1:1) Our existence is God's spoken word, and we are ***'sustained by his powerful word.'*** (Heb 1:3) We are told that this ***'Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us.'*** (John 1:14)

God does not stop there. He has more words and truths to speak over your life in a personal way. He has a *'secret name'* for you (Rev 2:17), and a hiding place for you. (Col 3:3; Eph 2:6; Ps 32:7)

God has a universe of Grace for you to live and move in now, that even present realities cannot touch or defy. (Ps 91:7; 2 Cor 12:9; 2 Cor 10:3-5)

Let God's word truly live in you, and build your own life in and through this living word.

'My words are spirit, and they are life.' (Jesus, John 6:63)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/words>



#91 (posted 12/16/15)

SOAK YOUR SPIRIT

Remember, the door we walked through that robbed life of life, was the door of *'knowledge...'* (Gen 3:5-6) We took all that life was, and demanded it to submit to our mind, our pride, and in doing so we lost life's eternal essence.

Life is so short now. Solomon writes, ***'With the increase of knowledge, is the increase of sorrow.'*** (Eccl 1:18)

The door of death, is not the same as the door back to life. We walked out the door of knowledge, but we come back to life, to eternal life, through a spirit door. Jesus said, ***'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.'*** (John 10:9) Jesus also said that his words were ***'spirit and life'*** (John 6:63), and to be born of the spirit, was ***'like the wind'***. (John 3:8)

Do you want to blow free? Do you want more than what can be contained in your own head, and reduced to reason?

Do you want what mind, body, soul and love are made of?

Lift your eyes in faith to Jesus Christ, and ask to walk free today.

'He who believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within him.' (John 7:38)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/soak-your-spirit>



#92 (posted 12/18/15)

FRAGMENTED. FREE.

We tend to strive for coherence. I hear myself and others trying to *'explain'* ourselves often, ducking and diving through words and feelings to connect pieces of circumstances and soul for that cohesive whole we call *'self'*. The slightest action or reaction out of our control or foresight makes us question again who exactly we are, makes us justify and defend...

Jesus was the most coherent and disparate man that ever lived. He is regarded as holy, and yet by human terms there was no man more divisive and direct in his claims about self and his teaching. Jesus was *meek and threatening* (Mt12:20; Lk 12:4-5), *healing and hurtful* (Mt 12:15; Mt 15:26), *shrewd and saving*. (John 8:1-11)

He lived this and explained this by saying that he did only what the Father did, in real time (John 5:19), and that he was, in fact, in the Father, and the Father in him. (John 10:37)

Jesus offers you this freedom. He calls you to walk with him to and through crucifixion of self, by faith in him, and your 'togetherness', your shell and tomb, will shatter, and your spirit will soar with him, now and forevermore.

'The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.' (John 3:8)

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/fragmented-free>



#93 (posted 9/2/16)

Virgin Mary

She was about 16 years old, engaged, and pregnant. This situation was scandalous!

Her story – that she was *'with child'* by the will of God and the Holy Spirit - was *'unbelievable'* to people, and even to her betrothed, Joseph. For this reason he planned to *'divorce her'* – or break the engagement – and disappear. (Luke 1-2)

Why would God make his entry in this scandalous way? Why put Mary through this? Why put Joseph and everyone else through this? What a powerful test of faith and of *'judgment'* for everyone involved, and everyone looking on! I cannot answer on God's behalf, but I do defer this reflection to you:

God's 'entry' to this life shook everyone and every 'norm' to the core. And he *'began'* this life, as he meant to go on! His whole life was one of challenging the hearts and perceptions of all mankind, particularly regarding his identity – which is the cornerstone of his message. He was ***'God in the flesh'*** (John 1:14), and through him we can all defy death, be made pure and live forever! (John 10:9) His life was a crucifixion of our pride, so in our pride we crucified him. But then he called us to carry on his life, through his power. He called us to take up our cross and follow him. (Mk 8:34-38)

Is your life hard? I bet it is! Are you misunderstood? Do you feel God himself has turned his back on you? So did Christ. (Mt 27:46) Christ will meet you on your hard path and make it a path of life, if you let him. He walked your walk so that he could walk with you. Will you let him?

Available online at: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/virgin-mary>



#94 (posted 9/8/16)

Good judgment, or judgmental?

Well, honestly, nine out of ten times in my case, the answer would be 'Judgmental!'

It can be so hard to distinguish between when we are simply 'adjudging' a situation – even if on a moral issue – or when we are being 'judgmental' – in other words, decreeing in our hearts and minds what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' about someone's heart or motive. Most of the time, as mortals, we are doing the latter. Why is this?

Something deep within us is deeply afraid. Ever since we sold our souls to 'knowledge' or 'knowing' (Genesis 3), we get very insecure when we don't know something, or cannot definitively 'call it'. So what we do is... call it! Yes, because we have declared ourselves 'gods', and live our lives by our own values and 'knowing', well, we better be right!

Right? 'Cause if we're wrong about this... or don't know about that... well, how do we know about our *own* lives, souls and destiny? So we judge! It is not just what comes out of our mouths, but what is going on in our heart. So even when I am the least '*vocal*' on a topic, I can still be the most judgmental in my heart.

There are so many scriptures about this issue, but here are just 2 to ponder. The first is spoken by Jesus, and the second written about him. May the Lord help us all grow in this area, and be more patient, more generous, and wiser with our words and judgments:

(Matthew 7:1-5) ***'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out***

of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.'

(1 Peter 2:23) '... when he [Jesus] suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.'

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/good-judgment-or-judgmental>



#95 (posted 9/21/16)

SPACE OF GRACE (#John8:36)

Jesus said he was the '**door**'. (John 10:9)

There is a reality - a Spirit - in and through Christ that frees us from deep within. His name, his Spirit, shatters chains that bind us, and opens our eyes to see. (John 16:15; Luke 4:18)

When Paul had seen Christ (*and you, too, have seen and believed on Christ*), he still agonized with discomfort in his heart, mind and body (Do you struggle with your faith?). He wanted to shake off this discomfort, to enjoy the revelation of God that he had seen. (You can read this powerful story in 2 Corinthians 12) Paul had seen, and believed, and now struggled with his belief and his responsibility as a Christ-follower. ***Can you relate?***

Today I have personally, desperately needed a 'door' to peace, to freedom, to new beginnings. Today I have personally met others who desperately need a 'door' to a new path in their life, a new hope for their future. There is only one 'door' that exists, through which you can walk and be free, be new, find forgiveness and eternal life.

'If the Son sets you free, you will be free, indeed.'
(John 8:36)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/space-of-grace-john836>



#96 (posted 10/18/16)

UNIQUE (Ex 3:14)

Have you ever felt lost in a crowd?

If you stop and ponder this experience, it's a pretty deep one. Being lost in a crowd is not actually the experience of being lost. I mean, you know where you are, right? You know your way home? But something about *'who'* you are seems to fragment into the mass. You feel like your very self has been swept away in a soundless, soulless wave of humanity.

When Moses asked God for his 'name', God said, ***'I am that I am.'*** (Ex 3:14) God claimed the very essence and source of being. We are told in Scripture that every man, woman and child is made in the *'image of God'* (Gen 1:27) – an original every time, because God's expression of self – comes forth like an eternal spring.

Listen, you may be torn and ashamed; maybe every day of your life, as far as you can remember, you have felt less than others, been told you're less than others, and never seen or felt your *'uniqueness'*, or your unique worth. Jesus himself was *'despised and rejected'* by people, but the people were wrong! We the people see each other wrongly. We look through prideful eyes. We relate through selfish motives. We are wrong!

The truth is – and I do hope you come to *'feel'* this – you are a unique expression of God, a prince or princess in the eyes of your eternal Father, and beautiful in his sight. Here is the great news for you today. God has provided us a *'door'* to walk through, so that we can experience this 'salvation'. Jesus himself – God in the form of man – said,

'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved.'
(John 10:9)

I implore you this day – walk through the door of Jesus Christ and be saved! Yes, a step of faith, coming from deep within your heart and soul, will walk you to and through the door of Jesus Christ. Call on him!

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<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/unique-ex-314>



#97 (posted 11/15/16)

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness frees people. It frees you, and it's how you free others.

Think about that hurt you inflicted on that person – 10 minutes ago, or 20 years ago. You know the one. The one that makes your stomach turn, that throws a dark cloud over any day, any moment, when you think on it. Now can you imagine if that injured party decided deep in their soul to forgive you completely? No big meet-up, no big moment, no painful eye contact. Just a message across time and space that said to your soul, *'You are completely forgiven!'* Forgiveness 'frees' people.

Listen to me: there is a King of kings, who owns *all* people, *all* of time, all *'justice'*. This King has the authority and the power to forgive you completely today, even if that long, lost victim can never be found, or faced, or will not forgive you. This is more stunning than any sci-fi story, higher than any high and deeper than any depth. This forgiveness can make you new, set you free, and open the heavens to you again.

'You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' (Matthew 1:21)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/forgiveness>



#98 (posted 11/15/16)

HIDING PLACE

Where is your hiding place? In your car on a long drive? A dark morning hour with coffee? Maybe in a crowd, or in white noise?

We crave safety from the womb, and never cease working for it. We spend all our time and money to build walls or tear down walls, all to find the same thing: Peace.

Maybe you have forgotten, as I often do, these words that were spoken to the shepherds about Jesus: **'... on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'** (Luke 2:14)

Have you experienced this peace of God? Jesus came to favor you, and give you peace – now and forevermore. This is the story of the gospel, from the beginning to the end of all scripture – God's peace in places of quiet, and in spaces of noise. (Psalm 23:2; 42:7)

God's peace comes to and through you, as Spirit. Call on Jesus today, and be filled with peace.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door and whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture.' (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/hiding-place>



#99 (posted 12/17/16)

MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL!

We find ourselves here in a world that spins. There are colors, lights, appetites, and aspirations, and it all moves faster than our little legs can carry us!

Here's the conundrum, however: It is all the one life, one 'continuum', and it simply *must* have a core, have a heart. ***Where is the heart of life?*** Where is the 'X' that marks the spot of life's hidden treasure, life's purpose?

There is so much more in and through life that we *cannot* see, than what we *can* see – love, spirit, heart, hope, distance, time, sense, thought, peace, joy, purpose, contemplation, reflection, kindness, etc. etc.

There is so much more in life that we do *not* understand, than what we *do* understand. There is so much more in life that has been created, than what we can ever create. So why do we only trust what we 'see' with our eyes, understand with our 'reason', and make with our own hands? God lifts our eyes to that which is outside every limitation and reach of our reason and our sight and our ability. He comes to us in '*revelation*'. He reveals himself. He simply 'is': '***I am that I am.***' (Ex 3:14)

This primal expression of God to Moses, outside of time, above and beyond existence, Jesus later claimed for himself. (John 8:58) Jesus stood himself in the very heart of God, of life, of love, of purpose. All this he expressed in himself – in the form of a man – so that we could 'relate'. In Christ we can see, touch and know 'Life'.

Know Christ, and know life. Here you have arrived. *Do you know him?*

'Jesus said, 'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved...' (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/make-sense-of-it-all>



#100 (posted 1/4/17)

YOUR LIFE CAUSE

Let's do this! Yes, New Year, time to go new places! The hardest places are deep within, not far abroad. I love this verse that speaks to this deep and stirring place, where man meets and connects with God:

'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls. All your waves and breakers have swept over me.' (Psalm 42:7)

So here's the question for the New Year: What is your deepest, clearest, 'only' life cause?

I mean, when all is said and done, who are you, what are you living for? When lights go out, portfolios disappear, loved ones are gone, health and mind fade... where, ultimately, have you banked your soul? Where have you expended your resources?

I leave you with these 2 verses to ponder. I hope God brings these Scriptures alive to you, and that Christ himself will become the cornerstone of your every cause:

'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and yet forfeit his soul?' (Mark 8:36)

'Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...' (Colossians 3:17)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/2017-your-life-cause>



#101 (posted 1/5/17)

THE GOD FILTER (Matthew 6:22-23)

I snap lots of photos on my phone. If I go to upload them to social media, I have lots of 'filter' options. The content of the photo is the same, but the filter options give the 'content' a new light, a different feel, a different emphasis, impact, message.

In many ways our lives here on earth have the same option, and challenge. We have a world 'filter' and a Christ filter available to us all the time. How we 'see' and understand – and therefore respond – depends on what filter we are seeing through.

Throughout scripture we have many instances and admonishments to 'see' in a different way. I think of Joshua, Caleb and the other spies that went into the land of Canaan. (Numbers 13-14) There were 2 opposing ways to 'see' – or interpret – what they had seen. One way saw the goal, and saw the God that was leading. The other way saw only the challenges and dangers, without God's goals, his faithfulness or his presence.

I also think of the story of Elijah and his servant. Read 2 Kings 6, you won't be disappointed!

Jesus is light – not just on eyes, but 'out' eyes. Yes, in the same way he is living water, not just over our soul, but up *out* of our soul. (John 7:37-38)

Is Christ the light on your eyes, and in your heart?

'The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!' (Matthew 6:22-23)

'I am the light of the world...' (John 8:12)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-god-filter-matthew-622-23>



#102 (posted 1/8/17)

ARID PLACES

There are places and spaces in our lives - every day - where the 'arid', the 'desolate', blows through.

Memories. Regrets. Lonely job. Lonely road. We spend a lot of energy and resources either dealing with these 'desert places', or trying to avoid meeting them in our minds and hearts.

Two points on this. First, the spirit of the 'arid' and the 'desolate' comes from mankind being cut off from the life and Spirit of God. In essence it is the spirit of death. And ultimately we do die.

Here is the second point, and the good news! Jesus came - God in the form of mankind - to bring life to the 'arid' space, the 'desolate' place. And ultimately to defeat physical death - to give us life eternal!

Here and now you can invite Jesus into your life, and let his Spirit pour into those arid places. He takes the '*sting of death*' out of the 'desolate' here and now, and he takes the '*sting of death*' out of death itself. For this reason when we '*die in Christ*', we come back to life and live forever! (1 Cor 15:55; Gen 3:5-6)

Jesus said, ***'Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life.'*** (John 5:24)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/arid-places>



#103 (posted 1/17/17)

#REVELATION

God 'reveals' himself to man, he does not 'prove' himself to man. Much like your own existence. You were created on God's terms and timeline; he did not consult you prior to making you.

When Moses asked God for a 'name' to give the people - something that would 'go down' with men - God said, ***'I Am that I Am. Tell them 'I Am' sent you!'*** (Exodus 3:14) God does not 'prove' himself to man, nor debate and evidence himself on man's terms. When the devil debated with Jesus about Jesus' identity, Jesus would not answer the devil on his terms of debate. Jesus did respond, but not on the terms set by the devil. Read this fascinating interchange in Matthew chapter 4.

Are you setting terms for God to make himself known to you? According to the Bible, God has already made himself known to you through creation itself, and the Bible says that you actually know this. God expressed his own, 'full' self in Jesus Christ, and now reaches out to forgive your sin, and give you eternal life, if you believe in him, open the door to your heart and receive him. This is his revelation to you.
(Rm 1:19-20; Col 2:9; Jn 5:24; Acts 3:19)

'... be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'
(Revelation 3:19-20)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/revelation>



WHEN IS HOPE GONE? (Rm 8:38-39)

At what point do your eyes drop? Maybe they dropped a long time ago? A lost love? A lost loved one? The sorrow of this life seems to have no bottom; the ache of the heart, no comfort...

Once there was a man who was condemned to be burned. There were 3 of them, in fact. They hoped - and even claimed - that their God would save them. The hour came, and they were walked to the furnace. No help came. They were thrown into the flames. The flames did not burn, however. It did not even leave a *'smell of smoke'* on their clothes. God himself walked with them in the fire, and walked them out unscathed. I wonder at what point, however, they had lost hope? (Daniel 3)

Ezekiel, a prophet of God, was summoned to the *'Valley of Dry Bones'* - a valley filled with the bones of the dead. He stood in silence, and waited. God asked him if these bones could live again. Ezekiel said, ***'Only you know.'*** God - through Ezekiel - called these bones to come together, and spoke flesh over them, and breath in their lungs. They came alive again. At what point, however, had these people lost their hope? (Ezekiel 37; Job 19:25-27)

Jesus was betrayed by his own disciple, and killed by those he had healed and loved. His own people brought his life and ministry to the floor in a pool of blood. Three days in the tomb, and he rose again, to live forever. His first 'life' had been temporary. After everything had fallen apart - his crucifixion - he came back stronger, immortal, and with the keys of hell. At what point had true hope been lost? (Revelation 1:17-18)

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

(Romans 8:38-39)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/when-is-hope-gone-rm-838-39>



#105 (posted 1/9/17)

#SPIRIT

What isn't spirit? Everything that is anything, is spirit, and the rest of creation are the rails it rides on.

What is hope? What is love? What is hate, patience, soul...? All things deep and true 'flow' from the heart, according to Jesus. (Luke 6:45)

This is 'spirit' talk. In fact, Jesus said all his words were '**spirit and life**'. (Jn 6:63)

According to scripture, God himself is spirit (Jn 4:24), and everything 'created' or 'physical' has been birthed in spirit. (Gen 1:1) We are told that everything in life is '*sustained*' by the Spirit. (Heb 1:3) Jesus told us that after his departure in 'body', God would send the Holy Spirit and he would be '*in*' us. (Jn 14:17; 1 Jn 3:24)

This Spirit and 'grace' of Jesus Christ is a place we can actually *build* our lives. In fact, it is the only secure place to build anything! It is the '*cornerstone*' of true life.

Jesus said he was a '*door*' to salvation. (Jn 10:9) You can walk in and through Jesus Christ right now. How? By faith! Yes, close your physical eyes, and open your spirit eyes, the eyes of your heart. Say out loud, '*Jesus, you are Lord. I believe in you!*' In this moment you will pass through the door of Jesus, into the 'cloud' and kingdom of God's spirit.

I will end with this - a powerful truth of God's Spirit, and what I call the '*space of grace*'. When you come to Christ and through Christ, and you enter into the realm and reality of his Spirit, you find eternal freedom. He speaks a new name over you, and you are a new creation. (Rev 2:17; 2 Cor 5:17) His '*report*' over your life is stronger than the report of your own past actions, and present struggles. The world, other people and your heart will

point and accuse you of things you have done and been. (1 Jn 3:20) But God, by his Spirit, speaks a *'better word'* over you, and sets you free! (Jn 8:36; Heb 12:24)

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower...' (Proverb 18:10)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/spirit>



#106 (posted 2/10/17)

FAITH & NO OFFENSE!

Probably the most famous set of verses used at weddings is from 1 Corinthians 13, defining 'love'. One part of it reads:

'...love keeps no record of wrongs... love always trusts...' (vs.6-7)

In my own marriage, for example, where I fail to 'trust' my wife, a distance spreads between us. Where I keep a record of wrongs, a distance spreads between us. Now, it is tough in my marriage because I am imperfect, and my spouse is imperfect, so truly there can be a basis for some breakdown of trust, and there certainly is a record of wrongs. So the challenge in this relationship is overcoming the 'realities' of our brokenness, with forgiveness, repentance, and other efforts and virtues.

Our 'love' relationship with God also requires 'faith' (or 'trust'), and a commitment to *'not take offense'*. Jesus is perfect in his relationship with us, so our challenge with him is not regarding a *'record of wrongs'*, but rather in resisting the urge to *'take offense on account of him.'* (e.g. believing he has let us down, or is responsible for bad things that have happened to us.)

Jesus challenges us to ***'not take offense on account of him'*** (Matthew 11:6), as even John the Baptist was tempted to do. (Mt 11:1-11)

The other challenge is 'trust', and in this relationship with God we can call it 'faith', because it is in the realm of what we believe but cannot see. This is how we 'trust' God: *We believe him. We believe his story, his words, his Spirit, his report. We are told in Hebrews 11:6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'*

So, my personal challenge these last few days in my effort to grow deeper in my relationship with the Lord, has been 2-fold:

A) To 'not take offense' at God:

How do I do this? Well, I stand against my feelings, doubts and disappointments, and pray out loud, *'I believe you are good, and that you have not and will not let me down!'*

B) To hold steady in my faith.

How do I do this? Well, I continue to pray for what I feel is true, what I long for in God, from God. I persist, do not give up, press forward, as he calls me to. (cf Luke 18:1-8)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faith-no-offense>



#107 (posted 3/11/17)

'I fear absurdity.'

'I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity.' I love this line in Salman Rushdie's *'Midnight's Children'*. (1981)

Here in a bookshop, walking up and down isles and isles of books... Just because it's a book - or factual or actual or instructional or entertaining - does not mean it's good for you or purposed for your destiny.

You can chase knowledge all the way down to nothing at all. We look inside our minds and spirits for meaning, from thoughts and travel and book clubs, to lucid dreaming and political scheming... Stop (if you dare), and ask yourself if you're any closer to that thing you're seeking.

Not all that glitters is gold. Not all words are *'spirit and life'*. And even real gold has blood on it, real words have malice in them... ***Where is the good? Where is the pure? Where is the point?***

Jesus came as God in the flesh. The pure, the holy, the mild - eye to eye with you and me in our relentless search for immortality. He came a road we have walked, but without the fear and sin that we have grasped. He ended his life rejected by men, feeling rejected by God, so that his blood would drip and fall on our souls, and usher us into healing and eternal life.

This is the story, my friends. And this is Christ's invitation to you today:

'I am the door. He who enters through me will be saved, and he will come in and go out and find good pasture.' (John 10:9)

Also available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/i-fear-absurdity>



#108 (posted 4/1/17)

Stared At Love and Missed It? (Isaiah 6:9)

My friend, you know it's true. Was it your father? Was it your mother? Is it your son? Is it your spouse? Now that it's gone, you know... when it's gone, you'll know... What *'love truth'* are you seeing and missing today?

Please dare to consider these 2 brief truths:

When God told Isaiah to prophesy, the very first thing he said would happen is that the people would, ***'see but not perceive, hear but not understand.'*** (Isaiah 6:9)

When Jesus showed his power (over and over again), many looked on - saw the miracles - but *missed* the man. They turned away, even plotted his death. (John 11)

Now if you're still here, I dare you to consider these 2 brief questions:

Have you 'seen' Jesus, but not perceived him?

If this is you, I implore you to look again. He will transfigure before your eyes if you *'seek'* him. (Jer 29:13; Mt 17:3)

Have you actually seen and felt the power of Jesus in your life, but maybe forgotten that revelation?

Think back. Did God whisper his own name to your heart? Do you know Christ is true, but do not follow him?

Turn back, my friend! This is no minor issue! (Romans 1:20)

Also available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/stared-at-love-and-missed-it-isaiah-69>



#109 (posted 4/5/17)

Looking For Purpose... (Jer 29:13)

Looking for purpose... means it is not something we already have and hold. We trek all over the globe to 'find' meaning, find self, find purpose... At a certain point we have to stop, and acknowledge, that *Another* holds the keys!

One Scripture that I find deep and fascinating, is where Paul was preaching to the people of Athens. He states God's 'purpose' in making all mankind, in all times and seasons (*including you and I, here and now!*)

'God made all nations in all times and seasons... He did this so that they would seek him, reach out for him and find him.' (Acts 17:26-27)

God made us and '*purposed*' us to seek God. Do you seek God? God's ultimate 'reach' towards us, was to become like us, in the form of man, Jesus Christ. In this way, God reaches out to us, to find us. Do you reach out to him, to find him? Your ultimate, spirit-filled purpose is bound to knowing Christ!

'Jesus said, 'I am the door. Anyone who comes through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/looking-for-purpose-jer-2913>



#110 (posted 4/19/17)

WAITING ON GOD & GODOT

Many moons ago I watched Beckett's 'Godot' in the 'Beckett Theatre', Trinity College Dublin. Godot never showed up. There is a proverb that says, '**Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick...**' (Proverbs 13:12a)

I've never waited on 'Godot', but I have – and do – wait on God, and I want to share 2 things about this. The first thing is very similar to waiting on Godot, the second is very different:

Waiting on God is a struggle! It is hard, it is deep, it is dark, it can feel despairing. All through Scripture – from Genesis to Revelation - we hear the cries of people who are '*waiting*' on God. We hear these cries from King David and Jesus Christ. (Psalm 10:1-2, Matthew 26:37-39; 27:46) Their cries and prayers are straight and strong, endorsed by God, canonized in Scripture.

Maybe you, too, have longed for God to answer prayer, to heal, to provide, to breakthrough, to come through... Maybe your heart is broken from this wait? In this, my precious brother and sister, you '*fellowship with Christ in his sufferings*', and you will certainly rise with Christ in his victory. (Philippians 3:10)

Now here is how waiting on God *differs* from waiting for another...

Even while waiting on God – he *is* there! Yes, this is true! He is with you as you wait for him! And I know that you – even you – feel this! In the quietness of your wait, in the salt of your tears, there is a 'hope', there is a confidence, there is an assurance. Jesus has promised, and will come through! ***This is the difference. In the wait, his Spirit resides.*** You weep, and he weeps with you. He bottles your tears. You do feel this. God makes meaning, truth, healing and power out of our weakness, and there will be '*joy in the morning.*' (Psalm 126:5)

In the wait, you are with him – and this is the essence of eternal life! He hears your prayers, and he will come through!
'... But a longing fulfilled is a tree of life!' (Proverbs 13:12b)

(Jn 17:3; Jn 11:35/Rm 12:15; Ps 56:8; 2 Cor 12:9-10;
Lk 18:1-8)

Also available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/waiting-on-god-godot>



#111 (posted 4/20/17)

GOD'S FIRST WORDS TO YOU! (Luke 5:20)

Jesus encouraged us to pray! He actually told a parable once, with the express purpose that we would 'persist' in prayer! (Luke 18:1-8) So, yes, pour out your heart to the Lord. He hears. He bottles your tears. (Psalm 56:8) And he will bring you victory!

But here is a key moment in Scripture that teaches us much. Let me share with you...

When a lame man was brought to Jesus for healing, Jesus looked at him, and Jesus' *'first words'* to him were, ***'Your sins are forgiven.'*** (Luke 5:20) Jesus heard the man's prayer, that is, his hope and request for physical healing. And Jesus did go on to heal him. But the 'first words' of Jesus, the first 'act' of Jesus in this moment, was to give this man a deep, eternal prize - forgiveness of sins, and eternal life!

Don't miss the deeper and wider and more eternal 'first words' that Jesus is whispering to you, and giving you, while you are in the act of asking for something else. Jesus will hear your cry and answer your prayer, but he may be 'first' giving you a spiritual touch, a soul healing, an identity promise. What is he saying to you? What are his first words to you at this time? Listen for this!

'He will seek me, and he will find me, when he seeks me with all his heart!' (Jeremiah 29:13)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/gods-first-words-to-you-luke-520>



#112 (posted 4/26/17)

YOUR #1 DOUBT

I have lost love, opportunity and character, because I doubted. I doubted myself, I doubted others, I doubted the 'signs', I doubted the 'warnings', I doubted truth and wisdom... There is one 'doubt' that literally costs us everything...

If you doubt how much God loves you, you can - and will - lose everything. Why? Because you will not, therefore, go to him.

Paul prays for us, asking that we would know ***'How long and wide, deep and high is the love of Christ...'*** He goes on to ask that we would ***'know this love that surpasses knowledge.'*** Why? So that we would be ***'filled with the full measure of God.'*** (Eph 3:14-21)

If we do not accept the love of God towards us, through the invitation of Christ, we will miss God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life. What is the 'invitation' of Jesus Christ? It is this: that we turn from our sin, and follow Jesus.

Have you repented of your sin this day, and put your faith in Jesus Christ?

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<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/april-26th-2017>



#113 (posted 4/26/17)

LET YOUR HEART BREAK...

We expend all of life – our money, time and relationships - trying to keep things in tact. Most of the walls we build, are walls around our heart. Most of the vacations we invest in, are ultimately from painful memories...

We fear stopping, in case there is nothing that meets us there. We fear the silence, in case there is no word or song of reassurance that comes to us there. We run and strain to find hope and healing and peace.

In some respects, however, we are running to find God, when He has already come to find us. Jesus said, **'I have come to seek and save the lost.'** (Luke 19:10) Maybe by 'seeking', you miss being 'found'?

These words of Jesus shake the earth and indeed all things temporal. If you hear these words, and in faith go through the 'door', you enter into life eternal. Stop running. Let your heart 'break', and the light of Jesus will pour in and heal!

'Come to me all who are weary, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28)

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and everyone who enters through me will be saved.'" (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/let-your-heart-break>



#114 (posted 5/2/17)

WORLD PEACE (Luke 6:45)

'From the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks'
(Jesus, Luke 6:45)

From the overflow of the heart, a nation is at war with another nation... a family with a family... a husband with a wife... a brother with a brother...

War spills up and over from the heart of mankind. World War is an extension of individuals at war with truth. We have the same essence of 'world war' at work within our own streets, our own homes, our hearts and minds.

If war on a world scale comes ultimately from the *'heart condition'* of all the individuals within it, I ask you:

Is your heart right with God? World peace, will come from Individual Peace - when mankind is right with God.

Jesus calls us to 'repent' of our sin. What this means is to recognize that we are sinful - full of selfishness, greed, envy, lust, vengeance, violence - and to *'turn'* from this sin. Jesus then calls us to put our faith and our trust in him. What this means is to recognize that Jesus is God, that he is Truth, and to commit our lives to him. ***Have you repented of your sin?*** Have you come by faith through the 'door' of Jesus Christ?

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and whoever enters through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/world-peace-luke-645>



#115 (posted 5/4/17)

The Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21-28)

Jesus spoke some very, very strong (jarring, hurtful) words to people. He was not harsh in spirit, but we cannot deny - and must absolutely learn from - those words of Christ that are actually hard to hear.

One example of this was when he was approached by the 'Canaanite woman', bringing to Jesus her 'demon-possessed daughter'. We are told that as she cried out for 'mercy', Jesus ignored her. Yes, he stone-walled her. If you do not believe me, read Matthew 15:21-28.

When this woman persisted with Jesus, he said, ***'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.'*** (vs. 26) This woman did not shrink back. She did not take offense. She leaned in, persisted further, even contradicted him: ***'Yes, it is Lord. For even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table.'*** (vs. 27)

Jesus commended her 'great faith', and healed her daughter.

Do you *'take offense'* at Jesus - at his presence, at his absence, at his words, at his silence? I do. Often. I wonder what I miss out on for this lack of faith and perseverance...

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-canaanite-woman-matthew-1521-28>



#116 (posted 5/5/17)

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Jesus warned of *'false prophets'* and even *'false christs'*. (Mt 7:15; 24:24) Possibly the most striking warning that Jesus gives is when he says that *'many'* will come to him - having done miracles in his name - and he will say, ***'I never knew you.'*** (Mt 7:22-23)

The preachers and church 'members' were the ones who turned against Jesus and called for his crucifixion. In the midst of their prayers to God, their songs about him, their networking and 'Hallelujahs'... they plotted God's death inside the walls of his own church.

What 'Christ' do you worship? What 'Prophet' do you heed?

In this brief video I share my heart on the true Gospel message:

<https://youtu.be/0fsRx7BzLlo>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/what-is-the-gospel>



#117 (posted 5/8/17)

PASSING THROUGH! (Hebrews 11:9-10)

Jesus said he was the 'door'. (John 10:9). He is the door to many, many things – forgiveness, healing, eternal life - but he is also the door to heaven. Truly, my friends, I encourage you to ponder the 'city' of heaven for 2 reasons:

Heaven Is *Your True Future*: We are told, in light of having been rescued by Christ and promised heaven, that we are only passing through here. Yes, we are told that Abraham lived in 'tents' because he had his sights set on the '**city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**' (Heb 11:9-10). We are told by Paul that we only live here by '*faith*', and that we are '**hidden with Christ in God.**' (Gal 2:20; Col 3:3)

Paul goes on to admonish us to '**live by faith and not by sight**', and to do so intentionally, i.e. to '**fix our eyes not on the seen, but the unseen...**' (2 Cor 4:18; 5:7) This vision of our true future, our true '*citizenship*' (Phil 3:20), gives us correct lenses for seeing this life, and doing this life...

Heaven Is *Other People's True Future*: If you do not have your sights on heaven – and the 'door' to heaven, Jesus Christ - you will not encourage and invite others to go through this door, to come to Jesus. This life is so demanding, pressing, 'urgent', that we will never find 'natural' time to make the 'Kingdom of Heaven' a priority here. This is the real battle of walking with Christ – his kingdom is not of this world. (Jn 18:36)

Heaven is astounding! It is true and imminent, for all who repent of their sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ. I encourage you to search up these two passages that are found in the last 2 chapters of the Bible, and ponder the picture of heaven:

Revelation 21:1-5 and Revelation 22:1-5

Know Christ. Share Christ. There is nothing outside of him!
(Colossians 1:15-20)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/passing-through-hebrews-119-10>



#118 (posted 5/9/17)

HOW TO... DESTROY DARKNESS! (2 Cor 10:3-5; Mt 16:19)

Deep within us – where ‘eternity’ dwells (Eccl 3:11) – we are not satisfied with simply containing or incarcerating evil. We know that even if the bad guy is caught, badness might not be contained, and may even be on the increase – *drilling down, spawning, spreading, thickening...*

We grow tired of ‘covering up’ bad stuff, and something in us – that part of us made in the ‘*image of God*’ (Gen 1:27) – craves a ‘*real*’ victory, a breaking in and through of ‘purity’, of true beauty, of holiness. We cry out from deep within for the wind of a Spirit to blow over all darkness – including our past – and sweep through with redemption, a new self, a new start, or as the prophet puts it, ‘*a new heart and new spirit.*’ (Ez 36:26)

If we fix this today, it will still be broken and gone one day. If we heal this today, it will still fail and die one day... This very mortality that courses through our veins from the day we are born, this ‘death’ we need to destroy! Death is the ultimate expression of all things evil – from the body to the soul, the broken child, the broken heart... Who can destroy evil, who can defeat death? ***How can we break free – now and forevermore?***

Jesus said, ‘***Live by the sword, die by the sword.***’ (Mt 26:52) The story of Christ is absolutely incredible, unequalled! God became man, and then lay down under the violence of men. Rather than defeating man, he allowed himself to be defeated by man, and used this ‘defeat’, this ‘bloodshed’, to destroy death itself. Yes, when Christ rose from the grave (the innate hope and yearning in every created human being), he brought with it the very ‘*keys to death*’. (Revelation 1:18) ***Jesus holds the keys to death – and he is the very doorway to eternal life!***

Jesus is life, the Destroyer of death and all darkness. You, too, in Christ can be a Destroyer of darkness.

We are told that our weapons – as believers and followers of Christ – are not those of the world (i.e. the ‘sword’, or guns and force). We are told that in Christ we have *‘divine power’* to demolish strongholds, and everything that sets itself up against God – like violence, lust, betrayal, abuse... (2 Cor 10:3-5)

Christ has the keys to death and life, but he puts these keys into our hands. He says, ***‘I have given you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Everything you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and everything you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’*** (Mt 16:19)

This is amazing power, and amazing responsibility! Do you pray? In Jesus’ name you can ‘bind’ darkness that you perceive here on earth, in violent and dishonest people! Do you ‘demolish’ strongholds? In Jesus’ name you can declare that dark powers - *and structures and leaders and relationships* - fall, and are no more, and that the light of Christ pours in...

We need more warriors! Jesus himself told us to pray for ***‘workers’*** (Mt 9:36-38), but he also called us to *‘be’* the workers! (Ps 94:16)

Let’s storm heaven and earth in prayer and testimony, that we might see true ‘Light’ and true victory sweep through our hearts, our homes, our nation, our world, in Jesus’ name!

‘The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!’ (Habakkuk 2:14)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/how-to-destroy-darkness-2-cor-103-5-mt-1619>



#119 (posted 5/17/17)

WHERE DO YOU HIDE? (Col 3:3)

It's OK to hide. It's natural to hide. We are born into the 'hiding game'!

The question is not, *'Should we hide?'*, but *'Where should we hide?'*

Let me jump straight to the 'answer', to the safest of safe places! The one that 'hides' the heart in healing, swallows up death, clothes us with a *'new heart and new spirit'* (Ez 36:26)... Jesus said that he was the 'door', and that in going through him – by faith, in spirit – we pass into salvation.

Four of my favorite verses in Scripture are below. If you repent of your sin, and commit your life to Jesus Christ, this eternal space will be yours now and forevermore!

'Your life is hidden with Christ in God.' (Colossians 3:3)

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run into it and are safe!' (Proverbs 18:10)

'The eternal God is your refuge, and beneath are the everlasting arms.' (Deuteronomy 33:27)

'The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, ever-brighter till the full light of day!' (Proverbs 4:18)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/where-do-you-hide-col-33>



#120 (posted 5/18/17)

'This will make you cry, dad!' (Mt 9:36)

My daughter, Anna (6), was telling me a story she had heard about a little girl and some boys. *'Do you know what those boys did, dad? This will make you cry, dad!'* Her brown eyes welled up, and she said, *'They threw rocks at her. One rock hit her in the head!'*

Seeing through her eyes, my heart did break. How far I have fallen! What I saw in Anna's eyes was the true heart of God. When Jesus saw the people – you and me – he was *'filled with compassion'*, he saw us as *'harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.'* (Mt 9:36) When Jesus looked out over his people – you and me – he wept because he longed for us to have peace. (Lk 19:42)

'Jesus said, 'unless you become like a child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' (Mt 18:3)

Do you see Jesus with the eyes of a child? Does your own sin grieve you because it grieves him? Does his death and resurrection break you and call you to him?

If we truly see ourselves as Jesus sees us, we repent of our sin and follow him. If we see others as Jesus sees them, it would make us cry, and we would 'pray' for Jesus to reach to them... (Mt 9:38)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/this-will-make-you-cry-dad-mt-936>



#121 (posted 5/22/17)

Be Loved! (Revelation 3:20)

To find God, is only to lift our eyes. We don't have to search, but rather allow ourselves to be found. Jesus – God himself in the flesh – came to *'seek and save'* us. (Luke 19:10) Jesus is *'God with us'*. (Mt 1:23)

Yes, God does want us to *'seek'* him also, just as any lover longs for the other to also be in pursuit, reaching for the relationship. God, in fact, made us with the purpose of *'seeking'* and *'reaching out to find him'*. (Acts 17:26) But the very next verse of this same scripture tells us – once our hearts are now turning towards him – that God is, in fact, ***'not far from anyone of us.'*** (vs.27) He is not only close, but part of us. We are told that in God we *'live and move and have our being,'* and we are his *'offspring.'* (vs.28; Gen 1:27; Jn 10:34/Ps 82:6)

God comes to us as Jesus Christ, and reaches for us today through the very Spirit of Jesus Christ. The *'good news'* of the Bible is not so much that God can be found, but that he came and found us. We need only lift our eyes!

Jesus, with you now, calls you to lift your eyes to him, and to let go of your sin. He calls you to lift your eyes, and let him come into your heart. Search no more – just be found!

'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.' (Revelation 3:20)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/be-loved-revelation-320>



#122 (posted 5/24/17)

Faithing (Hebrews 11:6)

Faith is a verb! Sometimes I take time *'to faith'* - that is, to focus my heart and mind and speak back to the Lord his own Word, his truths, his promises. I declare back to the Lord the truths he has spoken over my life. I do this in faith - often when I least feel like it. Why? Because, ***'we live by faith and not by sight.'*** (2 Cor 5:7) Because life's *'truest'* truths - like God, like the words of Christ - are *'spirit'*, and we see them with eyes lit by his light of revelation, not by the light of our own minds or experiences.

I often stand to my feet when I'm doing this - because I think of Moses standing with his arms raised over the battle, to see the victory through. (Exodus 17) I stand, and I proclaim something like this:

'Lord, you are true, you are holy, you are good! Lord, Jesus, you speak peace over my life. You have provided and will continue to provide. You blot out my transgressions, and remember my sin no more! You give me a secret name, and you call me your friend! Lord, you walk with me, and are pleased with me. Jesus, you have poured out your spirit on me, through me, and you bottle my every tear! Jesus, I am not offended on account of you. I know you live, I know you walk with me, I know my faith honors you, and opens doors before me. I know you love when I persist in prayer, in faith, in hope. I trust in you, Jesus. I know your blood defeats barriers, and opens new paths. I believe, Lord. I believe you, Lord. I rest in you, Lord.'

Then I usually sit in the quiet, the dark, and listen to the Lord. I sit silently with him and listen for his Spirit. I sip on my hot cup of coffee, and I might put on some good worship music...

#faithing (2 Cor 5:7; John 4:24; 6:63; Ps 36:9; 2 Cor 4:6; Ex 17; Heb 11:6; Is 43:25; Rev 2:17; John 15:15; I John 3:24; Luke

18:1-8; Heb 12:24; 2 Cor 10:3-5; Mt 16:19; 17:20; John 10:27;
14:26)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faithing-hebrews-116>



#123 (posted 5/26/17)

Who Am I, Really?!

So you have to stand up and speak... or you have to see that person... or you have to think about that painful past... In these 'moments of truth', there are many 'voices' in your head, many 'words' coming to you. The key challenge, the 'truth' that is in the balance and being assailed by lies, is the one concerning your identity – who you are.

What you believe about your identity - who you are - determines what you think, feel, and do. If you suddenly feel small or stupid, you will be timid, you will look to this or that person for approval, you will question whether you have the 'right' to say what you want to say, to hold the conviction you hold... You might shrink when you should rise! You might rise at times, when you should fade...

It is a question of 'authority' and 'power'. There is no self-help book or therapist in the land that has authority to tell you who you truly – *truly!* – are. Here's a mind-blower – *you* don't have authority over who you truly are! You can chant all night long about who you want to be, but you don't speak 'self' into being. You didn't speak yourself into the womb, and you don't speak your soul into identity.

Two points on this from Scripture:

First: *Your true self is in Christ alone.* Jesus is the one who made you, holds you, and 'identifies' you. (Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; John 1:3) He gives you your '**secret name**'. (Rev 2:17) Only in coming to – and through – Christ, do you enter into the dominion of your *true* self. You may be super-confident in your professional or even social realm, but these count for nothing! (Sorry, it's true! – John 6:63) When it comes to the *real* you, the one, in fact, that people are really '*feeling*', it's a question of sin, repentance, faith, spirit, soul. Jesus alone holds these keys. You must know him to access the true you!

Secondly: Jesus whispers your name to you. If you have repented of your sin and put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you are his. He will 'whisper' to you, the true word of your true self. Yes, there will always be challenges to this identity that God gives you. It will come from others, from your past sin, from the devil himself, and from your prideful heart. (Rev 12:10, 1 John 3:20) These challenges are often the 'noisier' voices, the more dramatic 'word' to you. But if you listen – and you *do* know Christ's voice (Jn 10:27) – you will hear the solid, eternal 'whisper' of Jesus to you, speaking the 'true you' to any and every moment when you are called to stand. Stand on his whisper! (1 Kings 19:11-13) Believe his report over your life! His grace is sufficient for you here! (2 Cor 12:9-10) **Soar!**

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/who-am-i-really>



#124 (posted 6/8/17)

Craving Loyalty! (Pr 18:24)

We say 'brother' to a friend when we have – or we want – a type of camaraderie, trust, 'loyalty' in relationship. I say 'brother' to just about every dude I chat with, and that's because I probably want life itself to be that safe place where harmony flows. I believe we all deeply crave this 'connection' with each other, with every human being. We want peace. We want harmony. We want 'loyalty' and goodness between people!

Let's jump straight to our dilemma. As Scripture writes, **'There is none good, no, not one!'** (Rm 3:10) Listen, you may not like this 'negative' view of people. I assure you, I'm not being 'negative' in that shallow sense. I ache to reach, touch and believe in the goodness of people. But in order to find the real treasure of goodness, the flowing spirit of the pure, we have to first face truth, our starting point. The truth is, deep within every 'friend' I have, and the 'friend' they have in me – there is a deep, self-centered darkness. God calls this 'sin'. This same sin that causes brother to turn on brother, is what moves us to turn our back on God.

From a very young age I can remember feeling that deep sense of loneliness. I had a great family, great friends throughout life, but I was always keenly aware of the limitations of mankind to really be there for me in the depths of my soul. The very best of my friends, in truth, is a million miles from the deep place in me that needs a friend. *Can you relate?* Here's the good news...

'There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.' (Pr 18:24) Jesus came as God in the form of man, and looked deep into our eyes. By his Holy Spirit, he still looks into your eyes. Jesus came, and even now, knocks not on the door of your house, but of your heart. (Rev 3:20) His voice does not only call to your ears, but to the very depths of your spirit: **'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls. All your waves and breakers have swept over me!'** (Ps 42:7)

Jesus is a door to the eternal Spirit of God. He literally spoke these spiritual words: ***'I am the door, and everyone who enters through me will be saved.'*** (Jn 10:9)

This day, if you crave a loyalty that will come to you and never leave you, and walk you out of mortality to eternal life, I urge you, I implore you, to repent of your sin, and put your faith in Jesus! He is the treasure that connects us to God, and ultimately will connect us *'purely'* to each other.

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/craving-loyalty-pr-1824>



#125 (posted 7/5/17)

Devil in the Detail! (Psalm 36:9)

Many cults use the 'detail' of the Bible to pin your mind to the wall, and deny you the true identity of God and Jesus Christ. Here's how...

I will be brief and to the point! First, '**God is Spirit.**' (John 4:24) Everything physical that we are and we see and touch, has been breathed forth by the 'invisible' and unfathomable Spirit of the unseen God. (Heb 11:3; 2 Cor 3:18)

God who 'spoke' creation into being, then spoke himself *into* creation – in the man of Jesus Christ. We cannot understand 'how' God can come and walk with us, and still be one with the '*Father God*' who created everything. We cannot understand this, but we can '*know*' this truth. How? Well, exactly the same way we can '*know*' the truth of God himself: **By faith, not by understanding or sight!** This truth of Christ's identity is not in and through the mind, but of and through 'revelation'. **It is revelation truth!** God does not submit himself and his powerful identity to and through our minds. He brings it like he brings the light, the rain, the galaxies, the soul, the spirit – he brings it upon us with revelation and power!

When we start to submit God's identity to our small, limited capacities of the mind – nothing fits, nothing 'can be', nothing sparks, nothing is true. It is like trying to put and 'see' the sun under a microscope. According to this viewing system, well, the sun just cannot 'be'...

Likewise, the '*Son*' – Jesus Christ - cannot be one with the Father when we try to see him under the detail of just words – even Scripture – without pairing scripture with the '**power of God.**' Jesus himself told us this in Matthew 22:29, and John 5:39-40. (*look these up!*)

Let the words of Christ – his own claim to being one with God –

wash over you in the picture of his walking on water, opening the eyes of the blind, and raising himself from the dead. In light of his own light, we suddenly see with the eyes of our heart, and walk into God's highest and deepest revelation of himself!

Did Jesus claim to be God? Yes, in fact, he did – many times and in many ways. And the rest of Scripture also teaches this mysterious, essential truth, from beginning to end. I'll leave you with a few scriptures about Christ's identity to look up and ponder in your own time. Below I end with 3 short verses that I love regarding the nature of revelation: Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 9:6, John 8:58/Exodus 3:14, John 10:30, 37-38, John 10:34, Mark 14:61-62/Daniel 7:13-14, John 9:38, Matthew 14:33, 1 John 2:22, Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:3, John 1:1-5,9,14, Revelation 1:13-18...

'In your light we see light!' (Psalm 36:9)

'We take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

'We walk by faith, not by sight.' (2 Cor 5:7)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/devil-in-the-detail-psalm-369>



#126 (posted 7/7/17)

God's Ways & His Character (Job 22:21)

We can sit around all day – or a decade, or a lifetime – talking and thinking about God and how he works. Or... we can actually get to know him, and how he works. The former can be, as Bono puts it, *'a long way down to nothing at all.'* ('Stuck In A Moment', U2) The latter can be exhilarating, liberating, but a road of humility and regeneration.

So this is why, first and foremost, God has given us a written record of his communications, his histories of interacting with mankind, his promises and warnings and reminders – the Bible. He has given us the Bible to give us a deep and wide overview and under view and cross-section view to who he is, and how he works. Otherwise, my friends, we would be left with simply my opinions, your opinions, etc. So what has God taught us about who he is and how he works? I set out 2 key points below:

God is Spirit, and he is Jesus Christ. This is the full and only story of the Bible, Genesis to Revelation. This is undeniable theologically. This is very, very deniable according to lots of *other* criteria and terms – such as opinions, philosophies, mishandling of the Bible, preferences, etc. But if you read the Scriptures to actually 'see' and 'hear', you will see and hear only this: God is Spirit, and this Spirit breathed itself into the person of Jesus Christ. Mysterious. Literally unfathomable. Beautiful. A door to eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and a new heart and new spirit. (*Isaiah 7:14/Mt 1:23, John 1:1-5,9,14, John 4:24, John 8:58/Exodus 3:14, John 10:30,37-38, John 14:9, John 9:38, John 14:33, Rev 1:13-18, Col 1:15-20, Heb 1:3, Isaiah 9:6, etc, etc.*)

You will know God's character by reading Scripture, and you will know the *'fullness of God in bodily form'* (Col 2:9) – his highest expression of his character, through the character of Jesus Christ. God's ways are inexplicable and powerful – and this is great news for you! Why is this good news? Let me jump

to the very end point, so that you'll let some of the mini-issues slide. Let's consider how God deals with my sin!

To actually deal with my sin, God did not just note it, *'forgive'* it, and turn a blind eye to it. Why? Because in this manner, my sin would be *'ever before me.'* (Ps 51:3) God might have forgiven and forgotten, but my sin would still be a blood stain on my heart and mind, now and forevermore. Is there a sin that scars your soul? Listen, look at how God works in this:

God, becomes man, takes your sin *into* his own self – his own body and history – and dies with it in cruel form. In fact, God – Jesus Christ – dies with it at our own hands. He *becomes* our sin (2 Cor 5:21), and we kill him in it. Now this blood that flows, a holy blood, brings Christ back to life, and we are now told: ***'His blood speaks a better word than the blood of murder.'*** (Heb 12:24) His blood covers our bloodshed, and turns our blood stains white as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

Here, through this door of Jesus Christ (John 10:9), he pours into us a ***'new heart and new spirit.'*** (Ez 36:26) Here, we literally start to feel our 'guilt' disintegrate, disappear from our history (2 Cor 7:10), and freedom starts to seep over us now, and forevermore... This is God's way! This is a kingdom of 'power' not of words. (1 Cor 4:20) If God works like this, his 'other' ways in our life we may or may not understand this side of glory, but we can trust him. He will fight the enemy for you. He will redeem. As my brother from another mother says, ***'Let go, and let God!'***

'Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you.' (Job 22:21)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/gods-ways-his-character-job-2221>



#127 (posted 7/12/17)

Alone. But Not Lonely! (John 15:15)

When I was 16 I gave in and bent the knee to Jesus Christ. It was not pretty. He weighed on my heart and convicted me of what I knew to be true – his own self. Everything was about to change – friends, activities, interests, thoughts and words. I stood still. Now on solid ground, but shaky on my feet. (1 Cor 3:11)

What I recall from these early days of following Jesus, was being on my own a lot. The first thing Jesus did was grip my heart and mind, and start to 'prune' my life. (John 15:2) I lost a lot of friends almost over night. I just could not go to the same parties, clubs, and even group 'huddles' in school anymore. There was so much immorality laced through my relationships and activities, that I found myself having to bow out of a lot of 'circles' and activities. For a season, I was completely alone. But I was not alone. Jesus was with me in spirit and truth. He was so close to me. My most alone moments in world terms, were my closest moments with Christ.

The other night, more than 25 years later, I realized something: I love being alone. I am so present with the Spirit of God when I am alone. I love not being able to sleep at night, because I lie in the presence of Christ there, just whispering to him, and seeing quiet glimpses of the joy set before me...

I have never been truly lonely, since dying to the world. (Gal 2:20) Ironically, when very close to the world, and to many people of the world, I was often lonely. Are you?

Jesus said, ***'I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'*** (Revelation 3:20)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/alone-but-not-lonely-john-1515>



#128 (posted 7/17/17)

Fragmented! (Rev 21:5)

Everything sad in this life is a type of fragmentation!

#1 – LIFE: People lose people who they love, and the heart aches. It is as if we are born into a life destined for losing each other! In this regard we are truly victims of such sorrow!

#2 – LOSS: Then there is a darker shade of fragmentation. More painful than the distance life puts between people, is the distance *people* put between each other. A son loses his father, because his father loses his way...

#3 – SIN: Darkest of all – a reality we must face – is the fragmentation we bring from greed and lust and rebellion. A child loses her innocence to theft, violence and cruelty of man.

My friends, the world is what it is because of our sin. Life's tragic hardship, and the sorrow and disappointment it brings, is nothing compared to life's destruction at the hands of men. For this reason, God speaks:

'Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' ... Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust?'
(Ezekiel 18:25)

As a people we are called by God to repent. We are called to call on God, say sorry for our sin, and turn and walk away from it. Repentance prepared the way for Jesus (Mark 1:1-5), and repentance continued to be part of Christ's message. (Mark 1:15) We must turn from our sin, and put our faith firmly in Jesus Christ. Why?

Because here – through repentance and faith – our sins are forgiven and we go through the '*door*' of eternal life! (John 10:9) Here, through repentance and faith, hearts and spirits find healing! (Ez 36:26) Here, through repentance and faith in Jesus

Christ, our hearts and our communities are *'healed'*! (2 Chron 7:14) Here – *and only here* – **'all things'** (hearts, marriages, past records, broken families, broken bodies, broken spirits...) are **'made new'**! (Rev 21:5; 2 Cor 5:21)

Do you long to see your fragmented heart and life come into a new 'wholeness', a new life? Lift your cry to Jesus Christ today!

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/fragmented-rev-215>



Lost Hope? (Revelation 21:5)

Jesus is at his most powerful where hope has been lost. Jesus, yes, is incredible in 'restoring', 'repairing', helping us to make the most of life; but he is 'most' miraculous, where he brings life back from the dead! Have you lost all hope? Have you lost people or opportunities that you can never get back?

Jesus not only heals the broken heart, but he gives us a **'new heart'**! (Ez 36:26) Jesus not only revives the spirit, but he gives us a **'new spirit'**! (Ez 36:26) Jesus not only heals relationships that are hurting, but he promises to reconnect us to loved ones that have been lost, to redeem lost love, lost moments to speak, lost sons and daughters... Jesus makes all things new! (Rev 21:5) Jesus connects us to people now, and will connect us to more people then! (Mark 10:28-31) Jesus reaches and preaches to souls in hell, and reaches and preaches to souls in their very last moments of life. (1 Pe 3:18-19; Lk 23:42-43) Jesus rewards people who even (only?) receive or bless *his* people. (Mt 10:40-42) There is merit not only in your baptism, but in those you are 'baptized' for, you pray for and ask God for! (1 Cor 15:29) God and his love and his reach, through Jesus Christ, is unfathomable! (Eph 3:14-21) His ways are higher! (Is 55:9)

So what does all this mystery in Christ, mean? Well, it means you can truly put your hope in him – for the impossible! (Mt 19:26) This is how we walk by faith and not sight or understanding. (2 Cor 5:7) This faith in God's ability to reach backwards, into the present, into the future, is how we *'please'* God. (Heb 11:6)

Jesus is the *'door'* to all things eternal, restored, made new, redeemed, healed – physically, relationally, spiritually, between sons and daughters and spouses and parents...

Call on Christ today! Pour out your broken heart to him! Tell

him who it is you wish you loved, wish you had listened to, wish you had embraced! Ask – in Jesus' name – that you will be able to see, touch, embrace that person again one day!

'They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' This is what the sovereign Lord says: 'My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them...'' (Ezekiel 37:11-12)

'Women received back their dead...' (Hebrews 11:35)

'I am making all things new!' (Revelation 21:5)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/lost-hope-revelation-215>



#130 (posted 8/18/17)

New Footing!

Do you need a 'new footing'? Has life itself lost its way? Have you done things that you regret so deeply, that you're losing hope? The deepest truths are 'spirit', and they only really show themselves in the 'deepest' – and often 'darkest' – of times...

The story of Jesus comes alive when we face the darkness. Why? Because his story – and truth – is one of *'defeating darkness'*! If we don't acknowledge the darkness of life, and ultimately of our own sinful hearts, the light of Jesus does not show itself fully. Jesus calls us not to 'deny' the truth of sin, but to 'repent' of our sin. To repent is to face our sin head on, call it 'sin', and reject it in Jesus' name. This is repentance!

In repenting, and putting our faith in Jesus Christ, we go through the 'door' to salvation! (John 10:9) And when we are in Christ, 'saved', we are made new! (2 Cor 5:17) We are made pure! (Is 1:18; 2 Cor 5:21) We are given a new, fresh 'footing' in life – now and forevermore! (Jn 14:6; Pr 4:18) ***Do you want to go through the 'door' of Jesus Christ today, and find a new footing for life?*** Turn from your sin, and put your faith in Jesus!

'Whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned but has crossed over from death to life!' (John 5:24)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/new-footing>



#131 (posted 10/25/17)

Are You Weary?

This morning I felt weary. Tired to the bone. Uninspired. I was praying for the strength, the heart, to stand up and start the morning routine. It dawned on me afresh – as it does on occasion – that everyone, everywhere, is striving in this life to find rest. As life wears on, rest seems more aloof, farther off, not nearer... I think we are searching, striving, for a rest that cannot be found, cannot be consummated, here on earth.

When Jesus came to earth – God in the form of man – he came to bring ‘peace’ and ‘rest’ to mankind. In fact, everything about the ‘story’ of God, from Genesis to and through Revelation, is about God bringing rest to mankind – starting with the soul, and then out to and through relationships and families and beyond the grave. This is the very essence of the message and promise and Spirit of Jesus Christ. The angels filled the skies and sang at his birth, **‘Peace on earth...’** (Luke 2:14)

We will not and cannot find *‘perfect peace’* here on earth. But Jesus promised to pour his **‘living water’** into our souls, and said it would become a **‘spring of life’** within us. (Jn 4:10,14; 7:37-38) The peace of Jesus can ‘birth’ in your soul here and now, and then flow with increasing power and influence throughout your life and on into eternity.

How do we receive this gift of eternal peace, and eternal life, from Jesus Christ? We simply lift our weary, blood-shot eyes to his face, and believe. We turn our back on our sin, and walk to and through the ‘door’ of Jesus Christ.

‘Jesus said, ‘Come to me all who are weary, and I will give you rest...’ (Matthew 11:28)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/are-you-weary>



#132 (posted 2/26/18)

Nothing Between Us (Luke 18:8) #faith

'*Nothing between us*' - I'm talking about our relationship with God, in a personal way. What is 'between' you and God? Is the space between you and God filled with faith and spirit - a pure, true channel of relationship? Or is the space between you and God filled with worry, with distance, with doubt, with hurt or misunderstanding?

Jesus told us we could bring our burdens to him, cast our cares on him, cry out to him for our needs and even our 'wants'. (Mt 11:28; 1 Pe 5:7; Luke 18:1-8) We are called by Christ to come to him like a child - innocent and open about what we need. (Mt 18:3) But Jesus comes to us, also, with *his* request. He comes to us and asks us to '*believe*' in him. He presses into us - even in the context of our prayers to him - and asks us for '*faith*'. That's all. (Luke 18:8)

When Jesus was on route to a man's house to heal his daughter, the servants ran to meet them and told them that the daughter had already died, to not bother Jesus any further. Jesus turned to the man in this moment and said, '***Do not be afraid, just believe!***' (Mark 5:36) Jesus walked on with this man, but more importantly, this man walked on with Jesus.

God came to us, in the person of Jesus Christ. The question now is whether we come to him. Jesus puts it in this tender, powerful way: '***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and dine with you, and you with me.***' (Revelation 3:20)

Have you come to Jesus in faith? Is the space between you and God, filled with a sincere faith in Jesus Christ?

For more on 'first steps' of faith in Christ, please visit this page on my website: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/nothing-between-us-luke-188-faith>



#133 (posted 2/22/18)

Miracle Catch! (John 21)

Jesus gave the disciples a 'miracle catch' of 153 fish. You can read about it in John chapter 21. But interestingly, just as the miracle was happening, Peter stepped away from it. He stepped out of the boat and into the water, and went directly to Jesus who was on the shore. (vs.7) The real 'miracle catch' in this event was not the fish, but Peter the man.

You see, Peter had denied Jesus, and left him to die alone. (John 18) In a sense, Peter - like you and me - had turned his back on God, on what he knew to be true, and he went the way of fear and 'self' rather than the way of the Lord. So at this moment when Jesus appeared on the shore while they were fishing, Peter was in a dark place, a place of separation from Christ, a place he deeply regretted and felt ashamed of. Can you relate?

So when Jesus appeared - and lavished on Peter a 'miracle catch' of fish, of provision - Peter realized that the way was open to him again to be with Christ, to be right with God, to be forgiven and restored. When Peter saw this way open before him, he stepped away from the blessing of the catch, and went directly to the Lord.

Jesus came - God in the flesh (John 1:14) - to connect personally with each and every person. One name given to Jesus was 'Emanuel', which means, '**God with us**' (Matthew 1:23) - and to be with us is the primary purpose of Christ. Jesus will bless all of us at times with miracle provision, or miracle healing or protection, but his ultimate goal is that his blessings given to us, lead us to him *personally* - to simply be with him.

Have you actually ever turned to face Christ? Or have you only enjoyed his light on your back, or on your path? (John 5:35) Jesus calls each of us to repent of our sin (practically and sincerely turn away from our sin), and to firmly place our faith in

him.

For more on taking that first, powerful step with Jesus Christ,
please visit this page on my site:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/miracle-catch-john-21>



#134 (posted 2/21/18)

The True Jesus (Jer 29:13)

Jesus himself said there would be false Christs. (Matthew 24:24) Jesus said there would be false prophets. (Mt 7:15) Jesus said there would be people who would call his name, and even do signs and wonders in his name, but they would not be true believers and followers of him. (Mt 7:21-23) Paul the apostle said there would be false Christs, false gospels, and even false 'holy spirits'. (2 Cor 11:4) Believe it or not, I find this comforting!:) I don't have to stress about the fact that there is going to be 'counterfeits' in the mix! But...

This cannot stop me knowing the true Christ, and speaking the true gospel message! I cannot fear the false, and go silent. This is pride at work. Stand up, be true, advance the gospel, and let Jesus do the judging!

And when I say to let Jesus do the judging, I mean even of YOU! Paul said that he did not care if the church judged him, if secular society judged him, and then he said, ***'Indeed I do not even judge myself... It is the Lord who judges me!'*** (1 Cor 4:3-4)

Jesus knows those who are his. (2 Tim 2:19) If we seek the Lord in truth, and call on him *'in truth'*, we will find the true Christ. (Jer 29:13; Ps 145:18) Jesus is one with God himself, is God himself, and when you see the true Christ you worship him. (Mt 14:33) Don't fear the false, don't even waste time fighting the false. Just lift Jesus high in faith and in word, and he will vindicate himself! (Jn 12:32)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-true-jesus-jer-2913>



#135 (posted 2/16/18)

Purpose? (Matthew 6:10)

The big question - what is my ultimate purpose?

I once heard a meaningless endeavor described as *'making beds in a burning house.'* This analogy stuck and never faded from my memory. It is a chilling image of the completely inane, or 'absurd'. And yet, the only reason it chills a man is because it describes most of mankind throughout most of history. People are investing every ounce of their strength and soul back into a life that is decaying as they build it, destined to die. If the house is on fire, honestly, don't bother making the beds.

Jesus - God in the flesh (John 1:14) - has told us what our grand purpose is! He has given each and every one of us a map for life, a road to eternity, an investment portfolio that will never diminish in value, only increase...

When Jesus was asked *'how'* to pray, he said this: Pray to God that his kingdom would come, and his will would be done, here on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10) Jesus gave us a prayer - and a life cause - to bring God's kingdom (as it is in heaven), to earth! This is God's grand purpose, and we are called to pray it and partner in it. ***You and I have an 'ultimate purpose' in Jesus Christ - to bring the kingdom of Jesus Christ to the hearts of people, and to this hurting world!***

It starts with you, however. If Jesus is not your King, then you cannot bring his kingdom to others. ***Is Jesus your King?*** Have you repented of your sin, and put your faith in Jesus? If you do, you step through the 'door' of Christ, into the kingdom of God. (John 10:9) Here you find the true God, your true self, and your eternal purpose - starting here and now!

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/purpose-matthew-610>



Build On Faith! (Eph 2:19-20; I Pe 2:5)

Faith is God's access point to his truth. God has chosen faith - an undefinable means of 'knowing', to offer us *'life that is truly life.'* (1 Tim 6:19)

Faith is not 'blind hope'. Blind hope is blind hope. No, faith is when a soul *'acts on'* belief. For example, when you know something is true deep down in your soul, you can 'act' on it, or don't act on it. You know this is the case. Think of things you do that you know are *not* right to do. Like, when you are alone, and you believe, know, would even instruct others that to look at certain images - like pornography - is not right to do, not good to do. But if you choose to do it, you are deliberately acting against something you know deep down to be right and true.

The same is true in the opposite direction. Like, for example, when you know somewhere deep down that Jesus Christ is true. You can't prove it, you can't see or point at him, but deep down in your soul, your spirit, you know that Jesus is true. You had this revelation, and you know it is true. Well, if you *'adopt'* this truth. If you actually commit your soul, your spirit, your heart to this truth, well, that's *'faith'*. If you know Christ is true, but do *not* commit your soul, your spirit, your heart to this 'belief', well, you are choosing to not put your 'faith' in him.

So to know something is true - is not the same as *'claiming'* it for your life, for your heart, for your actions. What you act on does not reveal what you believe, but it does reveal what you 'walk in', or what you have actually placed your faith in.

God works in and through faith. Faith is his access point to his truth, his kingdom. If you want the 'truths' of God, you have to not only 'believe', but to have 'faith' - i.e. adopt, claim, walk in

the 'belief'. I sometimes think of faith as 'belief in action.' Some key verses that distinguish between belief and faith are: John 8:31-32, James 2:19, Isaiah 29:13 (Look them up!)

When Christ reveals his truth to you - i.e. that he is Lord, that he is life, that he is everything - this is the '*door of Christ*' before you. (John 10:9) You need to walk through the door! Yesterday I was pondering this Scripture, while looking at, and even running my hand over a door frame. I was struck by how definitive a doorway is. Jesus said, '***I am the door, and anyone who enters through me will be saved.***' (John 10:9) This is an incredible image, an incredible truth. Jesus referred to people who were '*near*' (but not '*in*' - Mark 12:34). Jesus referred to people enjoying the 'light' of truth, but not entering into it. (John 5:35, 39-40)

To know Jesus is as 'actual' as knowing another person. ***Have you ever acted on your belief?*** Have you ever closed your physical eyes, and turned the eyes of your heart towards Jesus, and actually said sorry for the sin in your life, and told him that you believe in him, that you will follow him?

After going to and through the 'door' of Jesus Christ, you will embark on a life that builds on faith. Jesus - who you will know in spirit and truth - is the '*cornerstone*' of God's building in your life. (Eph 2:19-20) And your truest self becomes a '*faith person*'. Paul the apostle put it like this: '***I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God...***' (Gal 2:20)

So when we act on faith in Jesus, we step into our real life, which is a 'construct' standing on faith. This is not natural to our 'flesh', or our earthly bodies and our society. And this is why 'faith' is a challenge. And the rubber really hits the road when we start to 'build' on faith, putting our money where our mouth is - like taking earthly money and investing it in spiritual things (tithing, giving, sacrificing), like taking a private, spiritual experience of faith in Jesus Christ, and talking about it with real words, to real people...

God has chosen to use faith as the access point to his kingdom, and to use faith as the building blocks of that same kingdom life. It is humbling. It is unseen. It is spiritual. But it is beautiful, limitless and comforting as the wind! I leave you with these 3 scriptures to ponder.

'The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.' (John 3:8)

'We live by faith not by sight.' (2 Corinthians 5:7)

'Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.' (Hebrews 11:6)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/build-on-faith-eph-219-20-i-pe-25>



#137 (posted 2/13/18)

Presence of God (Psalm 46:10)

The purpose of God, through Jesus Christ, is to be *'with you'*. (Matthew 1:23) The purpose of God, in Jesus Christ, is to be *'in you'*. (Colossians 1:27) Jesus came - God in the flesh - to bring God back into 'relationship' with you.

There is a powerful 'communication' of Jesus to a church, which we find in Revelation chapter 2. Jesus speaks to this church and commends them for their 'works', for their fortitude, their faithfulness even in persecution. But Jesus says this: ***'I have this against you: You have lost your first love.'*** (Rev 2:4) Jesus goes on to say that unless they return to this 'love' - the very heart of his purpose on earth - then he would ***'remove their lampstand'***. (vs.5) Jesus is not about 'good works' or even fight and fortitude. He is primarily interested in a love relationship with you, with me, with anyone who will repent and believe. (John 5:24)

Have you ever gone through the 'door' of Jesus Christ - in repentance and faith? (John 10:9) To actually cross the threshold and step into a personal relationship with Christ, is why he lived, died and rose again. Rules already existed, religion and 'good works' were already in every corner of the world. But when Jesus was born, he was given the name - and the purpose - of *'Emanuel'*, which means, ***'God with us.'*** (Matthew 1:23)

Turn your heart and mind to Jesus today. Turn away from the sin in your life (repentance), and say out loud, *'Jesus I believe in you!'* (faith)

'Anyone who hears my voice and believes... has eternal life and will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life!' (John 5:24)

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus Christ,

visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/presence-of-god-psalm-4610>



#138 (posted 2/7/18)

Jesus: How? Why?

Jesus – God in the flesh (John 1:14) – came to be known. How can we ‘know’ him? Also, why should we know him?

Jesus was named, ‘*Emanuel*’, which means ‘**God with us.**’ Two Scriptures to look up (or search up) regarding this ‘name’, are: Isaiah 7:14 (This was written 600 B.C.), and Matthew 1:23. For more on Christ’s identity, I encourage you to search up these other incredible scriptures: Isaiah 9:1-7, John 10:30, John 14:9, Colossians 1:15-20, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:3, and John 1:1-5.

The purpose of Christ coming to the world is captured in his very name: ‘**God with us.**’ Christ came to unite mankind to God. Christ came to be with us, and in us. (Colossians 1:27)

‘*Why Jesus?*’: Well, primarily because Jesus is true. We come to Jesus because he is the truth of God. Jesus said, ‘**I am the truth.**’ (John 14:6) And, secondly, we come to Jesus because of what he promises us. Jesus comes to and through us with the very Spirit of God. He pours his forgiveness and eternal life into our beings, he saves our souls. We come to Christ for that ‘**life that is truly life.**’ (1 Tim 6:19)

How? How can we know Jesus Christ in a real, personal and powerful way? Jesus came to be known. **How can we know him?** The answer is: by faith.

What does faith in Jesus look like practically? Well, the first words of Jesus himself in the book of Mark were, ‘**Repent and believe!**’ (Mark 1:15) Faith in Jesus is practical. It is a heart that says, ‘*I believe!*’ Does your heart say this today? Can you utter it out loud in words? ‘*I believe in Jesus Christ!*’ And it is a life that ‘*repents of sin.*’ Show your belief in Jesus by actually repenting of your sin. Tell Jesus now that you are sorry for your sin, and you are today turning away from it. This is repentance!

Can you say this prayer out loud? ***'Dear Jesus, I am so sorry for all the sin and darkness in my life. Today I turn away from my sin, I repent of it!'***

If today you have believed on Jesus, and repented of your sin, you are saved! Jesus himself has ***'sealed you with his spirit'***. (Ephesians 1:14) It is really important that you take first steps now, and keep walking with Christ! Please check out this link on my website called, 'First Steps':

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/jesus-how-why>



#139 (posted 3/1/18)

Point of View (John 8:1-11)

Simply put, it's not *'what'* you see, it's *'how'* you see. This is the point, of any 'point of view'!

We all know this intrinsically, and live it in absolutely everything we do. That's why we obsess about 'perspective', perception, vantage point, outlook, glass-half-empty/full, attitude, 'Life Is Good' stickers, etc. Let's get to the most important person and important point, about 'point of view'...

Jesus - *'God with us'* (Mt 1:23) - said that some of us would see him and 'perceive' truth, and others of us would not. When you see - or hear about Jesus - do you see God, do you stop and worship, or do you walk on by? Two of us, side by side, can both be looking at the same person, at Jesus, but only one of us actually sees God. (Is 6:9; Mt 13:14-15)

Jesus told us that the eyes are the *'lamp of the body'*, and that if our eyes are good, our whole body is full of light... (Mt 6:22-23) Jesus is the ***'light of the world'***, and he tells us that if we believe in him and follow him, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (John 8:12) Jesus also told us - and modeled for us - that the only way to really see truth in this life, and to understand things like rules and regulations and values and motives, is when we are soaked in his Spirit of Truth. (Jn 8:19; Jn 5:19; Mt 22:29; Jn 5:39-40; Mt 4:1-11; Jn 8:1-11; Jn 8:31-32,36; Jn 14:6; 2 Cor 10:5)

To have life's truest, purest, eternal 'point of view', we need to see and believe Jesus Christ, and see the rest of life through the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, please visit:
<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/point-of-view-john-81-11>



#140 (posted 3/2/18)

Take me with you! #heaven

We all need a break from each other, sometimes! Even from people we love. We need space, and quiet, and peace. Let's face it, you need a break from them... and they need a break from you!:)

But there is something deep down in all of us that actually wants everyone to get that break. Have you ever gotten away somewhere, and while you're enjoying the peace, the quiet, maybe the wind or the waves, you wish that other person - the one you're getting a break from - would also get this peace, this quiet, this chance for rest? Maybe you actually feel a little guilty when you're getting that escape, because although you know *you* need it, you deep-down feel *everyone else* needs it, too!

Jesus was eager to preach his message because, as he said, it is **'good news to the poor.'** (Luke 18:4) Jesus came and spoke loud and clear into our short, toilsome life, saying that heaven awaits, and that the last here will be the first there! (Mark 10:31) We are told that those who repent and believe in Jesus, and go through him as the 'door' of God, will never really die, only pass into the arms of God, rise to meet him in the air, and live in his mansion, where streams of water flow through heaven's city, where youth is eternal, where there is no pain, suffering or tears. (*Jn 10:9; 11:25-26; 14:1; 1 Thes 4:13-18; Rev 21:1-5; 22:1-5*)

You can't take everyone with you when you get that vacation here on earth. But there is one place - heaven - where all can go, all can be invited, where the rest and the replenishment is perfect and everlasting.

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, and for that 'doorway' to heaven, please visit:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/take-me-with-you-heaven>



#141 (posted 3/2/18)

John the Baptist & You! (Mt. 11:11)

John the Baptist was a prophet who prepared the way for Jesus. How did he do this? Well, he came preaching to people that they needed to '*repent of their sin*', because the kingdom of God was near. (Mt 3:2)

Jesus said that John was the greatest prophet and greatest man born to woman! (Mt 11:11a) Although Jesus was paying John a high, personal tribute, Jesus was also making a very, very important point about truth and about you and me!

Jesus said that all the prophets, up to and including John, were '*prophesying*' - or preaching and teaching the truth of God - '*until now.*' (Mt 11:13) 'Now', however, the time of Jesus Christ, was time for something completely new, completely separate, completely different. Jesus said it was so radically different that even in light of how 'great' John was as a prophet, the very least of someone (you and me) in this new 'kingdom', was even greater than John! (Mt 11:11b)

What did Jesus mean by this? It is, in fact, very simple. So simple, that Jesus said unless we became like children, we would actually miss this truth! (Mt 18:3) What Jesus meant is that there is now nothing between you (or anyone) and God himself. There are no longer traditions, commandments, prophets, or 'laws', between man and God. John came as a prophet, 'pointing' at Jesus as God. But the person who 'points' to the prize is not as 'great' as the person who actually gets the prize. The person who points to the door, is not actually as significant, so to speak, as the person who goes *through* the door.

The 'Law' (the Old Testament books of the bible), and the prophets, exist to lead us to Jesus. (John 5:39-40) John was the last of these prophets. (Mt 11:14; Mal 4:5-6) John and the Bible leads up to Jesus himself. Now, standing here before

Jesus, God in the flesh, we need to make a decision. Do we believe the Law, the prophets, and actually repent and believe in Jesus Christ? If we do, we pass 'beyond' the Law and the prophets, and pass through a door into a '*new humanity*'. Do you want to be part?

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who believes in me will be saved...' (John 10:9)

'His purpose was to create in himself a new humanity...' (Eph 2:15)

For more on taking 'First Steps' in a relationship with Jesus Christ, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/john-the-baptist-you-mt-1111>



#142 (posted 3/8/18)

Are You A Good Person? (Mark 10:21)

Yes! You are a good person! There are a number of instances in the Bible where people - just ordinary people like you and me - are referred to as 'good'. (one is Acts 11:24) You are made in God's image (Gen 1:27), and the 'goodness' you 'do' and 'are', come from that image in your soul.

However... when it comes to the question of 'eternal life' - in other words, forgiveness of sin and being made right with God now and forevermore - your 'goodness' has nothing to do with it. Your 'goodness' is good, but not relevant - and not of any help - in getting right with God, having your sins forgiven, and going to heaven.

A '*rich young ruler*' approached Jesus one day and asked what he had to do to have 'eternal life'. He started by addressing Jesus in this way, '*Good teacher!*' (Mark 10:17) Jesus quickly took this 'focus' off the table. He said, '**No one is good but God alone.**' (vs.18) Jesus is not here nullifying people's general goodness; he is making sure that we do not think our own goodness has any part in the discussion about - and doorway to - eternal life.

Jesus asked him about his general adherence to God's commandments, but then said he lacked one thing: to sell his possessions, give the money away, and follow Jesus. (v.21) The man could not do this, and went away sad.

Jesus calls each of us to not let anything - our possessions, our relationships, our sin - get between us and him. Jesus - God in the flesh (John 1:14) - calls us to believe in him, and get 'practical' about following him. He challenged this 'rich young ruler' to put his 'money where his mouth was' - literally!

If you want the eternal life that Jesus offers, you need to put your own notions of your 'goodness' to the side, and actually

'follow' Jesus. This is a step of repentance and faith.

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, please
visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/are-you-a-good-person-mark-1021>



#143 (posted 3/16/18)

Good work that lasts! (1 Cor 3:13) #faith

We live to leave a legacy! We can't help it, we just yearn to find and nail down that 'purpose' of life, before life ends. Salman Rushdie said it so poignantly through his character in 'Midnight's Children' (1981): *'What I fear most is absurdity.'*

What can I 'do' here, that will last beyond the grave? I'm not just talking about what others might remember, or might be carved on a gravestone - because people's memories will eventually fade, and gravestones will eventually disintegrate... What work is there for me here, that builds an 'eternal kingdom', invests in an 'eternal portfolio'?

Jesus came - God in the flesh (Jn 1:14) - and offers us 2 incredible things. First, Jesus offers us his very self, which is the presence and person of God in our hearts, minds and souls. Jesus was given the name, *'Emanuel'*, which means, ***'God with us.'*** (Mt 1:23) When we lift our eyes to Jesus and believe in him, and turn away from our sin (repentance), he comes into our hearts by his Holy Spirit. In this precious moment of faith in Jesus, you are saved by him, and his Spirit pours in over your soul, now and forevermore. And this 'work' of faith (Jn 6:40), is the very first of your many works that will last...

Secondly, Jesus opens to us the kingdom of heaven, and allows us to start building that kingdom - a 'work' that will last. Jesus even taught us to pray for this, ***'... your kingdom come... here on earth as it is in heaven.'*** (Mt 6:9-13) In Jesus you can do 'works' now that last forever. What are these works?

The 'works' of Jesus that last forever, are works we do through 'faith'. (Heb 11:6) The works of Christ that honor God and have eternal value, are works that come from a heart full of faith in Jesus Christ. God's works are not simply a list of 'Do's

and Don'ts' - even good 'Do's and 'Don'ts'! If our works in Jesus are not works of faith, and works done in the Spirit of God's grace, they are not works that have eternal value. This might surprise you, but if you look through the 'Gospel' writings of the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), you will see time and time again that Jesus often confronted people - people who did lots of good works - and told them that their works were not good enough. Jesus called people to step off their 'grid' of 'good works', and first and foremost come through the door of faith in him. (Jn 10:9) After coming through the door of faith in Jesus, the 'works' we do thereafter must be in and through his Spirit of grace, truth, love and leading.

'Everyone's work will be shown for what it is...'

(1 Cor 13:3)

For more on taking that first step of faith in Jesus, in order to start building his kingdom in your life, visit:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/good-work-that-lasts-1-cor-313-faith>



#144 (posted 3/21/18)

#GRACE

God never allowed you to be hurt. God never permitted it. God never agreed to it. God hates what was done to you. Jesus weeps even as you weep. God will judge and punish the people that did this to you.

God stepped down from heaven and comes to you now. Jesus is his name. Jesus comes to you now, to heal you. He comes to take your hand and walk you into healing, purity, beauty, power, newness, confidence, quietness, perfection, peace. Jesus comes to take your suffering and sorrow away. He comes to destroy every shred of hurt and darkness that touched you, and to put in you a new heart and a new spirit. Jesus comes to you now to make you completely new - the old you (hurt you) gone, and a new you standing, now and forevermore.

You might ask Christ, *'Where were you when I needed you?'* You might cry, *'If you can save and heal me now, why did you not protect me then?'* Jesus looks into your eyes as you cry, and he cries, too. His eyes well up with tears and he listens. He loves. He understands. He does not answer you with words, but with his own self. He does not judge you. He looks into your eyes and loves you. When you wipe your eyes, his head still hangs, his tears still drop to the floor. Jesus never gets over it. He never moves on. He never explains it away. He *'hates wickedness'*, and has no darkness in him. Nothing he has ever done - in your life or in anyone's life - has hurt in it. He has always been with you, when man was against you and failed you. Jesus knows your pain and your story, because he was the only one who did not turn his face away. When men failed you and abandoned you, they abandoned him, too. When men hurt you and betrayed you, they hurt and betrayed him, too. When they abused you, they abused him, too. When those you had loved were not there for you in danger, they fled from Christ also. When we left you to be crucified, we left Jesus to

be crucified, also.

It was not Jesus who failed you. When we crucified Christ, we crucified you with him. He is the only one that actually was with you, that stayed with you, that suffered and died with you. The rest of us fled, turned, denied. It is we who cannot be trusted. ***It is mankind that abandoned you.***

Jesus will meet you here and now and walk you out of the tomb. He died with you, but rose again to life, and will walk you out of the tomb. This is where Christ meets you - here, in the grave where man left you. Here - today and now - Jesus asks you to trust him. Jesus asks you to believe that he has not failed you, and that he can walk with you into a new life, a new 'self', a new creation. Jesus knocks on the door of your heart to come in. Jesus offers you his hand to walk out through his door of eternal life. (John 10:9)

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, please visit:
<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

'I will put in you a new heart, and a new spirit.'
(Ezekiel 36:26)

'Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.'
(1 John 3:8)

'In Christ is no darkness at all.' (1 John 1:5)

'Jesus hates wickedness.' (Heb 1:9; Ps 45:7)

'Everyone in Christ is a new creation.' (2 Cor 5:17)

'Everyone in Christ - their old 'self' is crucified with Christ and gone!' (Gal 2:20)

'A tree is recognized by its fruit...A good man brings good

things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.' (Matthew 12:33,35)

'Jesus said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom to prisoners, to give sight to the blind and to set the oppressed free.' (Luke 4:18)

'A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out!' (Matthew 12:20/Isaiah 42:3)

No work of Christ has a shred of evil in it! (Mark 3:22-30)

Other Scriptures to look up and allow to soak into your soul, to define the heart of Jesus and the Jesus you know:

Matthew 18:6-9; Matthew 21:12-13; Acts 23:3 (*and see verse 11*); Luke 13:31-32; John 19:10-11; Matthew 12:22-32; Romans 12:15; John 11:35; Luke 19:42; Eph 3:14-21; Isaiah 32:17; Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 25:40; Rev 21:1-5; Rev 22:1-5.

'God says, 'You call me unjust? Is it not you, mankind, that is unjust?' (Ezekiel 18:25)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/grace>



#145 (posted 3/23/18)

Stand! (Eph 6:13)

Have you ever been 'stood up'? Ever arranged to meet someone special, crossed land and schedules to get there, and they're not there? The heart sinks when you realize they are not just late, but not coming. You thought this meeting meant something to them... You thought *you* meant something to them, but you now realize, you might not...

Jesus said he would be coming back again to meet us in a very particular place. He will be there. Will *we* be there to meet him? Jesus tells us exactly where he will come to find us...

The '*meeting place*' is not a physical, geographical place; it is a 'place' of the heart, of the soul. It is where the heart is full of faith in Jesus Christ, and where we have not '**taken offense on account of him.**' (Mt 11:6) What is meant by '*taking offense*' on account of Christ?

Well, it is where we have become disappointed, doubting, discouraged, and walked away from the meeting place. To 'take offense' is ultimately to lose faith - to lose faith that Jesus is with you, that he loves you, that he is the Son of God and that he is coming for you. Because we lose faith, we wander from the 'meeting place', and when he comes for us, well, we're not there. Jesus speaks of this time and time again, and calls us to hold tight, hold fast, and be found standing in faith! (Luke 18:8; Mt 25:1-13)

'... put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.'
(Ephesians 6:13)

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, and walking in faith, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/stand-eph-613>



#146 (posted 3/24/18)

Living Hope (=Live.In.Hope) #Mark5:36

'Hope' is a curious thing. I have always wondered at it. Where is the 'space', the reality of *'living hope'*, or living *in* hope?

The obvious block to my mind and spirit is the linear in this life, the passing of time and the facts of things lost or gone. It is easy to *'hope'* for tomorrow, because it has not yet come and gone. In fact, regarding 'tomorrow', one does not know if one is actually 'hoping' in any spiritual sense, or just hoping in the sense of wanting and waiting to see... ***But how does one 'hope' for that which is already lost?*** Is there such a hope? In the spiritual sense we just referred to, is there any *other* kind of 'hope'?

When I read Scriptures I see stories of people who hoped for what was dead and gone, and it came back to life. I read of people who saw realities - things true here and now - that no one else could see or fathom or experience. There are moments where the facts said one thing (and people said it also), but God defined it differently - like someone being 'dead', but Jesus saying she was, in fact, 'asleep'. There was a moment right here, for example, if we could stop the clock, where a man would be looking on a dead loved one, but Jesus was challenging him to see, say, believe, that this was not death, but sleep. (Mt 9:24)

The prophet Ezekiel was led by the Spirit to the Valley of Dry Bones. (Ezekiel 37) This valley was full of dried bones of people long dead and gone. Then the Lord called Ezekiel to prophesy to these bones, and call them to life. The bones rattled together, and before Ezekiel's eyes sinews and ligaments and skin came over the bodies, and breath into their lungs. This act of creating before the eyes of a man, reminds me of the act and process of Jesus actually creating eyes in the eye sockets of a man. (Mk 8:22-26)

When Jesus died, also, we read an account of tombs breaking open and people who had died coming back to life and moving back into the community. (Mt 27:51-53) When I think of 'hope', of Spirit-led and Spirit-filled *'living hope'*, I think and wonder about the truth and reality of these people, i.e. that person who saw their lost loved one placed in the Valley of Dry Bones, who wept and resisted and said, *'No! No! This person lives, he lives!'* I think of the child of the buried man in Jerusalem - who later was to come alive - who at the funeral would not cry, and would say to people quietly, under their breath, that their father was not dead, that he was alive, that he would still see him and spend time with him. I think of the mother of the blind man - that Jesus was later in life to heal - who, when he was born without eyes, refused to 'see' it this way. She loved him and insisted that her child did have eyes, that he did see, that he was perfect.

It is easy to look back and see who had 'hope'. But what interests and challenges me is not who had hope, but what reality of truth the hopeful were living in when the rest of us simply grieved and lamented. Their *'living hope'* was, in fact, a different reality, a different universe, and it was the **truer** one. Their hope for things lost was truer than our acceptance of things lost. Their reality of things alive, was a truer reality than ours of things dead. This is what intrigues, challenges, and now speaks to my soul.

Job spoke a truth about himself, but only came true for the rest of us thousands of years later. But Job's words and vision - impossible and unconsummated in his lifetime - were never truer, higher and more eternal. In many respects, they preceded him, and flowed to and through him, and continue to flow from the heart and throne of God, to and through all of existence, purpose and purity. His timeline was impossible (*'after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my skin I will...'*); his vision blasphemous (*'I will see God [the unseeable] with my own eyes'*). And yet what does an earthly profession sound like when it captures and expresses the Eternal? What does a *'living hope'* experience feel like in the bounds of the limited, broken and mortal?

'I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I will see him with my own eyes. I and not another. How my heart yearns within me.' (Job 19:25-27)

So here's my 'free fall' on this issue, my 'soaring' - and I define it this way because it is more like a boundless space of the Spirit, than a 'point'. Jesus often called us to walk in faith and in hope, on paths that were not of this world or timeline. He unveiled to us through miracles paths that were 'other', like walking on water. (Mt 14:22-33) Through encounters Jesus revealed to us timelines that were 'other', like transfigurations and out-of-body realities. (Mt 17:3; Rev 1:13-18; 2 Cor 12) God revealed spiritual 'armies' that were present and strong, surrounding physical armies that were threatening and unseeing. (2 Kings 6:17)

I know the love and will of God is pure, life-giving, holy and beautiful. I know that anything outside of this reality is not his will. (1 Jn 3:8; 2 Pe 3:9; Mt 18:14; 1 Tim 2:4; Ps 45:7; Heb 1:9; Jn 10:10; 1 Jn 1:5; Mk 3:22-30) I believe that to *'live in hope'*, or to have and live in the reality and truth of Christ's *'Living Hope'*, is to believe that even when a man dies, he lives; when a man is born without eyes, he has eyes; when a child is hurt, he should not have been hurt, and will one day never have been hurt. (Jn 11:25-26; Ez 36:26; Rev 21:5; 2 Cor 5:21)

God's will and ways are never thwarted. Things happen that should not, and are not allowed by God, not his will. But *'living hope'* in Jesus Christ says that God's defeat of the grave is going to race back through time and un-do all hurt and sin that has been done. God does not just move forward and patch up, cover up, and leave things to be forgotten. No! God, through the suffering of Christ, makes all things 'new' - does not just repair all things. (Rev 21:5) This is impossible for us to know and fathom. Impossible. We only have a one-way timeline, and that is forward. This is why - perhaps the best reason why - we take hold of 'hope'. Not just any hope, but a ***'Living Hope'***.

(Rm 5:1)

We take hold of Christ's power over Time, and his *'blood that speaks a better word'* than blood spilt through sin (Heb 12:24), and we hope in Christ to race back through time and change everything, make everything perfect again, and delete the history of sin not just from our minds, but from history. Who can fathom or understand such a reality at work, such a truth in force? Not me. So I live in hope.

'Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?... 'Don't be afraid' Jesus said. 'Just believe.' (Mark 5:35-36)

For more on connecting with the source of eternal life, Jesus Christ, please visit the 'First Steps' page at:
<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/living-hope-liveinhope-mark536>



#147 (posted 4/13/18)

Living Stone: YOU! (1 Peter 2:5)

You are where it all happens! Not in a church building, not a camp or conference... Not in a committee, fraternity, sorority, golf club or masonic lodge... You – *'God in you'* – is where it happens! Let me explain...

Jesus came to bring the 'word off the page'. We are told that he was the *'Word of God made flesh.'* (John 1:14) So God is no longer just 'written words' or 'Scripture' to us, he is flesh – Jesus Christ!

Jesus also came as a 'stone' in God's greatest construction – the very dwelling place of God. We're told that Jesus is the *'living stone'* and *'chief cornerstone'* of God's presence. (Eph 2:20; 1 Pe 2:4) And we are told that we – if we repent of our sin and believe in Jesus Christ – that we, too, are *'living stones'*, part of that same construction of God, his *'dwelling place'*. (Eph 2:22; 1 Pe 2:5)

God became 'flesh' to reach us, to connect with us. Jesus stepped into our world, so that he could actually *'dwell in us.'* (Col 1:27) So in Jesus, God comes to us, and dwells in us – and we become *'living stones'* in God's dwelling place!

My friends, in Jesus Christ you are the church! You are the *'living stone'*, not just earthly bricks and mortar. Christ – through faith and repentance – lives inside you, and you are where God is, where truth happens. In Christ you do not go to church, you are the living stones of church.

Have you let Jesus into your heart, and become the very dwelling place of God?

'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?' (1 Corinthians 6:19)

For more on taking 'First Steps' with Jesus, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/living-stone-you-1-peter-25>



#148 (posted 4/19/18)

You who hurt! (Matthew 11:28)

Do you hurt? Is your heart broken? Do you ache?

Jesus said that he came for the hurting and weary. Jesus said that he came to **'seek and save the lost.'** (Luke 19:10) Are you lost?

Jesus said that he came to gather you in his arms. (Matthew 23:37) Do you need his embrace today? Jesus said that he came to forgive. (John 8:11) Do you need forgiveness? Jesus said that he came to heal the broken heart. (Mt 12:20) Does your broken heart need God's healing?

Jesus' name actually means, **'God with us.'** (Mt 1:23) Do you need to feel God with you? Jesus came not to bring us more 'words', but to bring us power to change. (1 Cor 4:20) Do you need power to change today? Do you need power to change your own heart, soul, and your life path, your job, your relationships, your legacy?

If you die with Jesus today, you will rise with Jesus today - into a 'new you'! Do you need a new start?

Jesus said if we repent of our sin - that is, if we actually take action, turn away from it, throw it out, cut it off, drop the call... and if we believe in him, we will be saved! We will in that moment pass through the *'door of salvation'* into a new life.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who enters through me will be saved!' (John 10:9)

For more on taking that 'First Step' with Jesus, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/you-who-hurt-matthew-1128>



#149 (posted 4/20/18)

'You should not be surprised...' (John 3:7)

When you watch the news... When you listen to what people say about other people... When you think about what was done to you... When you think about what you've done... When you think about your own thoughts... Jesus said, '**You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'**' (John 3:7)

Maybe you've heard the phrase, '*born again*', but when Jesus said it to Nicodemus no one had ever heard it before. And most of us don't realize that the first part of this phrase was, '**You should not be surprised by my saying...**' Why should we not be surprised by Jesus - God in the flesh (John 1:14) - telling us that we need to be '*born again*'? Because every one of us is weary at the darkness and damage of our own lives!

There comes a time when there has been too much damage to patch something up, to refurb' it. We throw it out, and buy a new one. We start again. Jesus came not to cover up the old, or patch it up... He came so our sinful life could die with him, and rise with him to a new life. He came so that we could be 'born again'. Honestly, if I look at my life, my heart, my record, my despair - it does not surprise me that God would whisper, '**You must be born again.**'

For more on taking a 'First Step' with Jesus into a new life, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/you-should-not-be-surprised-john-37>



#150 (posted 4/25/18)

Jesus as Serpent (John 3:14-15)

This title is jarring - Jesus as Serpent - but it was Jesus himself who made the analogy. What did he mean?

Many years before Jesus was born into the nation of Israel, this same people were led by a man named Moses. They were a 'family' at this point (a big family of many tribes, thousands in number), and they were wandering in the wilderness. God was leading them through the prophet, Moses.

At one point this people group began to grumble against God, complaining about their hardship. As a result, the Lord sent venomous snakes among them, and these snakes would bite the people, and they would die. The people began to cry out to Moses and God, saying they had done wrong. So God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent, and set it up in the camp where people could see it. God said that if anyone was bitten by a snake, they could look up at the bronze serpent, and if they did this - lifted their eyes to the bronze serpent - they would be healed and not die. (Read this account in Numbers 21)

Jesus, over a thousand years later, said these incredible words, with an incredible promise:

'Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.' (John 3:14-15)

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we have 'grumbled' against God, turned our backs on his leadership in our lives. This has left us 'bitten' by the mortal serpent of sin. We are destined to death, and eternal separation from God. When the Israelites recognized their sin, and cried out for help, God gave them something to 'turn towards', to believe in, as a way to show sincerity in their repentance.

In the same way, my friends, God has offered us a 'way' to walk free from our sin. He has provided us his Son, Jesus Christ, and calls us to turn and look to him for life. Jesus, crucified by man, was *'lifted up'* in the camp for all to see, like the serpent. And he calls us to lift our weary eyes and look to him now for life, for salvation.

With a heart of repentance, and a heart of belief, lift your eyes to Jesus today, and be saved!

'...everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.' (John 3:15)

For more on taking a 'First Step' of faith in Jesus Christ, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/jesus-as-serpent-john-314-15>



#151 (posted 4/23/18)

Buy Without Money! (Is 55:1)

One day I was in a fast-food line behind a lady and her four kids, a couple of them teenagers. She was at the till, fumbling through coupons and coins, trying to come up with the money for something really basic for them to eat. She was dressed as a prostitute, and the kids' heads hung low, their eyes on their shoes as mom tried to find the money... Her heart was broken. The kids' hearts were broken. My heart was broken... I asked for a quick word with her to the side, and gave her money. I remember as she looked into my face, with tears rolling down hers. She thanked me, and got back in line to buy the food.

One of life's most tragic realities is money. Some people have too little money to buy what they need, what they want, and it breaks hearts. People enjoy 'buying' when they have the resources to buy (that fun transaction, exciting exchange of one thing of value for another), but the issue of money and all that money is, has made 'buying' an impure experience from the cradle to the grave.

When God describes his heart for us, his home for us, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, he leaves us the thrill of buying, without the mortal currency of money:

'Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.'
(Isaiah 55:1)

Here God gives us the dignity of 'buying', but without the limitations, pressures and shame that money brings. This is an impossible reality for us to fathom. This is the very essence of paradise. All peoples with the dignity to choose and 'buy', without needing money to do it.

This Spirit of this Paradise can be yours even now. Jesus

called out to us all:

'Is anyone thirsty? Let him come to me and drink! He who believes in me... streams of living water will flow from within him.' (John 7:37-38)

Here Jesus echoes the words of Isaiah from 600 years earlier, calling out to the thirsty, and promising not just refreshing, but *'living'* water, and not just to flow over us, but *'from within us.'* This is the 'impossible' reality of paradise, the Spirit of 'living water', the thrill of limitless life, buying without money... and this is the Spirit of Jesus that God offers us here and now. How desperately we need this in and through our souls! How desperately we need this in and through our land!

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, please visit:
<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/buy-without-money-is-551>



#152 (posted 4/26/18)

God's Embrace (Mt 23:37) #Jesus

This life is lonely! This life is cold! Almost every effort and investment we make is to counter the natural forces of life - which are danger, loss, decay, betrayal, discouragement... Sometimes I am overwhelmed by the burden that is life, the sheer load that each day places on my shoulders. Can you relate?

It is against this backdrop - life's brokenness and hardship - that Jesus came to earth.

Jesus - God in the flesh (Jn 1:14) - came to **'rescue us from this present evil age.'** (Gal 1:4) Jesus - self-denying and compassionate (Phil 2:7) - came to find us in the cold shadows, and warm us with light. (Luke 19:10) Jesus - forgiving and healing (Luke 5:24) - came to embrace the lonely, restore the despairing. (Mt 12:20)

Listen to the words of Christ as he looked over the people, and cried:

'How I have longed to gather you together, as a hen gathers her chicks...' (Mt 23:37)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/gods-embrace-mt-2337-jesus>



#153 (posted 4/26/18)

DEATH'S DOOR TO LIFE

When we are facing a terminal illness, all of life looks, feels and is different! Many philosophers and authors write about the anguish and mystery of a person knowing the day and time of their departure. The reason we are so mystified by this 'terror' of suddenly knowing, is more about why we are *not* terrified all the time - since we all know from early youth that a time is set...

But is death only to be ignored in order to find peace in this life? Can anything good come from knowing, or even briefly focusing on our end, on 'death's door'? I think so! The Psalmist writes:

'Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom!' (Psalm 90:12)

There is a way to look at death's door, in order to see life's door - now and forevermore... The fact is, from the moment we are born, from the very get-go, we're on a timer, ticking down to that moment when everything stops. That fact is not enough to give us a map for living, but it certainly should frame up our pursuits, our sense of value, an urgency to get right with the one, true God and the very source of life. Listen to this incredible claim of Jesus Christ:

'I am the door. Anyone who enters through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

And here is another claim of Christ, that can and should lift our eyes, map our steps, buy our soul:

'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live!' (John 11:25-26)

A glance at death's door can throw light on the 'door' of Christ, the door of eternal life. Have you gone through this door?

Available online at:

<http://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/deaths-door-to-life-john-109>



#154 (posted 4/30/18)

Jesus Wept. (John 11:35)

When Jesus saw Mary weeping, he wept.

Mary had suffered the loss of her brother, and she wept, and Christ wept with her. This was God's heart for Mary's suffering, and this is God's heart for your suffering.

Jesus did not give reasons for the tragedy, or say to her that it was for the best. Jesus did not say this was her lot in life, written in the stars, or God's best plan for her. Jesus did not look for good things that led to this, nor good things that might come from it...

When Mary's heart broke, Jesus was **'moved deeply in spirit and troubled.'** (John 11:33) He asked where her brother lay - and Jesus moved towards the tragedy, the darkness, the loss. Then the word simply states, **'Jesus wept.'** (vs.35)

When at the tomb, we're told again that Jesus was, **'once more deeply moved.'** (vs.38)

Jesus believed, prayed and called Lazarus forth from the grave. But what impacts me today, 2000 years later, is that the heart of Jesus for your pain, my pain, remains the same, and comes to us by his Holy Spirit. Jesus weeps with you. Jesus is **'deeply moved and troubled'** by your sorrow. Jesus is **'once more moved'** by your broken heart. Jesus moves towards you in this pain, and comes to heal, forgive, restore, and open the gates of heaven for you to come in.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

For more on knowing Jesus Christ personally, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/jesus-wept-john-1135>



#155 (posted 5/2/18)

God in the Mix! (Mt 1:23) #Jesus

Life without a relationship with God is possible. But life without God is impossible! There is a similar parallel here with your parents - but lucky for us, God is not like our parents!:)

Life itself was created by God, and is sustained by him. We live and move in the palm of his hand.

God created us to love us, and to be fully within our soul, spirit and life. From God we have all that we have, including the breath in our lungs. God designed life so that he would be in us, and us in him. Heaven and earth were made as one space, one place. What shattered this union of heaven and earth, and God and man, was our 'sin', our hearts determined to do life alone, and to do what we want.

The good news is that God restored the highway between heaven and earth, and the soul-way between God and man. God stepped into our world in the person of Jesus Christ, and laid himself under the burden - the punishment - of our sin. He died a gruesome death at the hands of mankind, and then rose again to forgive us, 'repair us', and offer us eternal life.

God is in the mix of our life! He hovers by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and offers to fill your soul, your spirit with the truth of himself. He offers to pour himself into your heart and soul, forgive you, heal you, and 'connect' you to God.

We were made by God, and for God. We were never designed to do life without the very Spirit of Jesus Christ coursing through our souls. Life in Christ is, what the Bible describes, as the **'life that is truly life.'** (1 Tim 6:19)

Fall to your knees today, repent of your sin, and call on the name of Jesus to save you. He will!

'Anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has passed over from death to life!' (John 5:24)

For more on knowing Jesus Christ in a real, personal and powerful way, visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/god-in-the-mix-mt-123-jesus>



#156 (posted 5/7/18)

The Point of the Bible... (Matthew 1:23)

The whole point of the Bible is... to know God! Not to know 'about' God, and definitely not to know more than others about Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew or theology, etc. etc. etc.

Jesus said these powerful words to the Bible scholars in his day:

'You search the scriptures because in them you think you possess eternal life, but you refuse to come to me and have life.' (John 5:39-40)

The devil himself knows and quoted the Bible to Jesus in Matthew chapter 4. If even the devil can know the 'written word', what is the point of the written word, the Bible? The whole point of the Bible is to 'know' and 'love' God, to 'get off the page' into a living, loving relationship with Jesus.

Jesus was given the name, Emanuel, which means, ***'God with us.'*** (Matthew 1:23) Jesus was the Word of God made flesh. (John 1:14) If anyone uses the Bible – and Jesus – to try to drive you to another 'point' or purpose, they are mishandling the Bible. The purpose of the Bible is to bring you to the living Lord, Jesus Christ. It is not to bring you to a religion or organization 'about' Jesus. You do not need to be part of any particular church or denomination, to know Jesus Christ and be saved. If anyone tells you differently, they are using the Bible to lead you elsewhere, rather than using the Bible to lead you to Jesus.

Jesus is the point! He is *'God with us'*, and is here with you today, to be loved and known. Nothing stands between you and Jesus Christ - except your own heart's decision...

For more information on taking a personal 'First Step' with Jesus Christ, please read:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/the-point-of-the-bible-matthew-123>



#157 (posted 5/7/18)

True Freedom of the Soul (Galatians 2:20)

Can a man ever be free, if his soul is in chains?

Jesus once put it this way, ***'What does it benefit a man to gain the whole world, and yet forfeit his soul?'*** (Mark 8:36)

How can I truly be free? How can I be liberated from the inside out, from the very depths of my soul?

My friend, according to Jesus we need to first be rescued from the scars and condemnations of sin. We need God to pour out healing and forgiveness on the wounds of our heart, and then set our feet on a true path of life – eternal life. Do you want the ***'new heart and new spirit'*** that Jesus offers you? (Ez 36:26) Do you want a completely new start where your sins have been forgiven, and healing power pours over the hurts done to you? Do you want to go through a door of 'new life', and have not just earthly, but heavenly freedom coursing through your veins? Read these 2 verses carefully, and consider closing your eyes and praying to Jesus, to receive what he offers you here:

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who goes through me will be saved, and they will go in and come out and find pasture.' (John 10:9)

'Jesus said, 'If anyone believes in me... streams of living water will flow from within them.' (John 7:38)

For more information on taking a personal 'First Step' with Jesus Christ, please read:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/true-freedom-of-the-soul-galatians-220>



#158 (posted 5/11/18)

Hard to Love? (Revelation 3:20)

Do you find it hard to love? Do you feel that you are hard for others to love?

We live in a broken world, a dark reality, and our hearts are broken! If you find it hard to love or be loved, there is hope! God offers us a 'door' to pass through, which restores love in our heart.

When Jesus is speaking to the church, he says, ***'I stand at the door and I knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and dine with you, and you with me.'***
(Revelation 3:20)

As broken people, with broken hearts, we need the *Author of Love* to come in to our hearts and *'dine with us.'* We need to receive Love, and let Him warm, win and resurrect love in our hearts.

'God is love.' (1 John 4:8) And in the person of Jesus Christ love comes to us. Have you heard Jesus knocking on the door of your heart? Have you opened the door to let him in?

For more on taking a 'First Step' of faith in Jesus, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/hard-to-love-revelation-320>



#159 (posted 7/17/18)

Faith is Crazy! (2 Cor 5:7)

Faith is not the same as belief. I like to describe faith as, '*belief in action*'. Faith is that spiritual engagement of truth that cannot be seen or even proven by the systems, values and experiences of this world. Faith is about truths that pertain to another world. However, faith is what makes that other world's truth, a reality here and now.

You see, 'belief' is not so much something you choose to have, but choose to acknowledge. I remember when I took a serious, honest look at Jesus Christ. Belief was upon me. I could have refused to go with my belief, but honestly I could not deny in my heart that Jesus was true. I looked at him, and I believed. When I decided that I was going to walk in that belief, or actually have faith, it was a hard decision. My belief I could hide, and still go and live as I wanted; but faith – putting my belief in practical action in my personal life – was going to cost me. And it cost me! I had to repent of my sin, and change my friends, language, thoughts, life style. I thank God for his practical demands on my life, in and through Jesus Christ, because I would not have the relationships I now do, if not for his 'Rehab' program of repentance!

In the eyes of the world, my friends, *faith is crazy!* You are walking in a revelation of truth that the eyes cannot see. Your heart sees and knows, because of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Look up these powerful verses about the nature of seeing and believing on Jesus Christ: Matthew 16:15-17; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Mark 4:11-12; 2 Corinthians 5:7.

But we are called to walk in faith, and make our faith in Jesus a living reality in our lives here. Jesus taught us to pray that the kingdom of God would come down and be real in our kingdom here on earth. (Matthew 6:9-13) We are called to make our faith a reality in our lives here! How? Well, start by spending quiet time alone with Jesus. He is your friend. Get a Bible and read a

chapter a day (maybe start with the Gospel of Mark?), and just sit a few minutes and listen to Jesus, and speak with him – which is prayer!:)

'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'

(Hebrews 11:6)

For more on 'First Steps' with Jesus, please visit: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faith-is-crazy-2-cor-57>



#160 (posted 7/18/18)

Faith Is HARD! (Heb 11:6)

Everything about 'faith' goes against our natural lives! Faith is putting a belief into action, here and now. Faith is submitting the facts and figures, to the authority of spiritual values. Faith is not acting on what our eyes can see and people are speaking into our ears, but what our heart knows is true and God is whispering to our soul. To live like this is to go against the flow, to walk up-stream, to defy very real forces of this world – it is hard!

Jesus called us to live by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor 5:7)
Jesus called us to 'strive' in this direction. (Heb 4:11) Paul gives us a picture of what it takes to actually put faith in motion in our earthly lives; he writes:

'I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 3:12-14)

Jesus called us to prioritize his kingdom here on earth – going so far as to say that we should worry more about his kingdom than about our own provision. (Matthew 6:25-34) This takes faith, and this is hard! Jesus called us to pray and live for bringing his kingdom to earth, and making it invade and be a part of our lives. (Matthew 6:9-13) This takes faith, and this is hard!

And then we are told, ***'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'*** (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus came to light our hearts with revelation, and then to call us to a life of faith. My friends, if faith is going to be a real part of your life, if Jesus is going to actually move by his Spirit in

your life - your work, your heart, your relationships, your eternity – it is going to take investment! It is going to take determination!

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<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/faith-is-hard-heb-116>



#161 (posted 8/13/18)

Jesus Cast Fire! (Luke 12:49-51)

Three intense verses – and words – of Jesus Christ, read as follows:

'I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.' (Luke 12:49-51)

One key point on each verse:

FIRE: Jesus was full of passion! Although he would heal, forgive, feed this or that person, or these or those groups of people, he wanted to see the whole world engulfed in the flames of forgiveness, healing and eternal life.

CONSTRAINT: Following on from above 'Fire' in the heart of Christ, we hear that he had to live a life of '*constraint*' (holding back), until he had undergone incredible suffering, pain, the crucifixion.

DIVISION: Jesus is willing to carve things up – in your heart, and between you and others – in order to bring you peace. His peace is different. (John 14:27) And Jesus is willing to fight your demons to get it to you.

Do you feel the '*sparks*' of the fire of Christ? Do you feel the '*division*' that his name and his message brings into your mind, your soul, your relationships? Let go, and let Christ get to you!

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#162 (posted 4/26/17)

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15)

'Prodigal' = wasteful, wayward, lost the path... Can you relate?

Jesus tells a story about a 'prodigal son' (or daughter). This story is about you and me, and our relationship to our Father God. Here's how it goes...

This son went to his father and took his inheritance early – in other words cashed out his father's property and savings – and hit the road. He spent it recklessly on prostitutes, pornography, drink, drugs and popularity.

When hard times hit – and they always hit – this young man saw what was real. His money was gone, his friends, his pleasure, and he hungered physically and spiritually. He was destitute and lost. This son now had to consider and face his relationship with his father. He decided to venture home, to ask forgiveness for what he had done, and to ask for food and shelter and a job to do to earn it. He set out...

When he was near home, the father ran to meet him. He embraced him. He ordered that his servants bring this his son the very best clothes, jewelry, and to get ready a feast to celebrate his return. The father said, ***'My son was dead, but now he is alive!'*** (Luke 15:24)

My friends, Jesus tells us this story to show us the heart that he has for us. Jesus gave us *'life, breath and everything else'* (Acts 17:25), and we have all used this life – the resources that belong to Christ – on our own pleasure and dark desires. We now find ourselves full of regret, shame and hungry – physically and spiritually.

Through this story Jesus is calling us home. He is assuring us that if we come with a humble heart, acknowledging that we have sinned, have wandered from his path, he will run to meet

us. He will embrace us and forgive us. He will reinstate us in his household as sons and daughters, and clothe us with dignity and beauty.

There is an incredible story of how God has made this *'forgiveness'* possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But that story is not for right now. Right now, Jesus – with your name carved on the palm of his hand (Isaiah 49:16) – just calls you to come home with a repentant heart, and he will pour new life over you!

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#163 (posted 8/27/18)

Jesus > theology

Jesus greater than theology. What do I mean by this? Well, my friend, the whole point in studying – or knowing – ‘*about*’ God (theology), is to actually ‘*know*’ God. Personally.

Jesus is God in the flesh. He stepped out of heaven so we could stop thinking, studying, giving opinions about God, and actually know God. Jesus said:

‘He who believes in me believes not in me, but in him who sent me. And he who sees me, sees him who sent me.’ (John 12:44-45)

The very name or title given to Jesus – ‘*Emanuel*’ – means, ‘*God with us*’. (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus squared up with the students of the day – the experts on theology – and here is what he said: ***‘You study the scriptures... but you refuse to come to me and have life.’*** (John 5:39-40)

Jesus came to give us the personal touch and presence of the living God. In fact, without actually looking into the face of Christ, you cannot see God. (2 Cor 4:6) To really see and know the fullness of God and his character, you need to receive the life and character of Jesus Christ. (Col 2:9)

My friend, are you weary searching for life? In the Bible we are told that coming to actually see, touch, know Jesus Christ, is to take hold of the ***‘life that is truly life.’*** (1 Tim 6:19) This very day you can step off the ground of this dark and broken life, and soar in the eternal, pure and new Spirit of God. You do this by turning your back on your sin (repentance), and putting your faith in Jesus Christ. ***Are you thirsty? Are you ready?***

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#164 (posted 9/8/18)

'Who are you, Lord?'

'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man!'
(1 Tim 1:13)

Paul described himself in this way. Paul, who went on to become an apostle and author of 13 books of the Bible, was once a man of violence. Do you struggle with anger, with the spirit of violence? Me too!

Here's what happened: Paul felt the light and presence of God on his life, on his soul. And he asked this question honestly, with his eyes and heart lifted to heaven: **'Who are you, Lord?'** (Acts 9:5) Here's the answer that came back to him, and broke the spirit of violence and anger in his soul: **'I am Jesus.'**

My friend, we can all use anger management classes, self-help books, etc. But the actual power to break violence and sin in the soul, comes from the light of Jesus. We are told that he – and only he – can give us a **'new heart and a new spirit.'** (Ez 36:26) *Do you need a new heart, a fresh start?*

Jesus came to us as *'God in the flesh'* (John 1:14) He came and said that he was the *'door'* to eternal life, to forgiveness of sin. Here is what Jesus asked of us: **'Repent and believe.'** (Mark 1:15)

Have you repented of your sin? Have you put your faith in Jesus? A new life, from God's power, awaits you this day!

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#165 (posted 9/21/18)

What is Prayer? (Matthew 6:7)

Jesus said, ***'When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.'*** (Matthew 6:7)

Prayer is about relationship. If there is no relationship, 'words' mean nothing. This is true in our friendships, and families. It is also true – even truer – with God.

Prayer is not just about communication. Enemies communicate with enemies. They speak to them. They ask them for things. But this is not prayer.

Prayer is about coming to God in 'relationship', and communing with him. Sometimes our truest 'prayer' is simply being close to God, facing in his direction, walking with him. The powerful 'prayer' of Moses, so to speak, during the battle against the Amalekites, had no words; rather it was an act of holding his hands high towards God. (read Exodus 17)

Sometimes in our walk with God, our hearts will 'need' and 'cry' but will not find the words. We are told that in this place and space of relationship, Jesus ***'intercedes for us'***, and the Holy Spirit ***'groans for us.'*** (Romans 8:26,34) True friends help you say what you need to say, even when you can't. So does Jesus.

So what is our part? What is it that God really calls us to, if our 'words' are not the key? ***He calls us to come to Jesus in repentance and faith.*** In other words, God calls us to turn away from our sin and darkness, and towards his Son and his light. And to actually entrust our soul - our very lives - to him.

This step of faith in Jesus *is* your prayer that will ring out in heaven, now and forevermore!

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#166 (posted 10/15/18)

Faith You (Luke 18:8)

The *'Faith You'* is the true you.

The person you are naturally, the 'self' you're 'feeling', is not the truest you. The true you is called forth, breathed forth, spoken over you by your Creator. And you step into this 'true you', by faith.

Your friends might say you're this or that person. Your own heart might speak a message over you. Your mind. Your actions. Your past. Your guilt. All these things 'report' on who you are. But it is Jesus Christ, who ***'ransomed you with his blood'***, that defines the 'true you'. (1 Pe 1:18-19)

You can step into your true self in this way: step through the 'door' of Jesus Christ.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved.' (John 10:9)

If you turn towards Christ today, and allow him to embrace you, you will be in the arms of God. You will be standing in the very Spirit of Truth, and it is here that your *'Faith You'* will find its footing, now and forevermore.

Jesus said, ***'Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'*** (John 18:37)

My friend, to access the very soul of your truest self, you need to stand in the very Spirit of God himself, which is Jesus Christ. Look to him, and go through the door today!

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#167 (posted 10/24/18)

Your Kingdom! (1 Cor 3:13)

God's kingdom, is your kingdom! It's in the process of being built by God, and we're supposed to be building it, too! This is your true home, your true future, your true inheritance. This is your only *real* post-retirement plan!:)

First, how do we become part of this kingdom? Well, Jesus himself said: **'I am the door, and anyone who enters through me will be saved.'** (John 10:9) We access the kingdom of God, by passing through the 'door' of Jesus Christ. We do this by turning our back on our sin (repentance), and declaring with our mouths (out loud), **'Jesus is Lord.'** (Romans 10:9) Have you repented of your sin, and put your faith in Jesus Christ?

When we enter into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are now **'co-laborers'** with God in building this eternal place. (1 Cor 3:9) We live here on earth, but we now live to build our eternal dwelling, a kingdom that will never end. Now that's a worthwhile investment!

This is serious business, my friends. As builders, we are called by God to build. In fact, we are told that one day, when we stand before God, **'our work will be shown for what it is.'** (1 Cor 3:13) This is also exciting news, a true mission here on earth as the ultimate goal of all we do. So many people are looking for purpose; well, here it is! We are called to pray, and live, **'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth...'** (Mt 6:9-13)

If you are not yet clear on how to build on the **'foundation of Jesus Christ'** (1 Cor 3:11), pray and ask the Lord to show you your station, your post. It is not easy to get a career here on earth, and it is not easy to really see and know our building post in the kingdom of God. We need to **'seek God with all our heart'**, if we want that kind of treasure! (Jer 29:13) So, lift your eyes today, and ask God to take you deeper in your walk with

Jesus, and show you your role here on earth, in building the kingdom of God.

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#168 (posted 10/26/18)

Mission: Gap (Ez 22:30)

God asked the prophet to **'stand in the gap'**. (Ezekiel 22:30)
God was asking for someone to step up to the edge of the earth, so to speak, and call out to heaven for the people. God was looking for that person to advocate for the salvation of the people, of their city, of their souls. *Are you in the gap – between man and God – for the salvation of people?*

God is the answer, and Jesus Christ is his 'door'. Jesus said, **'I am the door, and anyone who enters through me will be saved.'** (John 10:9)

Jesus taught us that if we repent of our sin (turn our back on it), and put our faith in Jesus for *'forgiveness'*, we will be saved. We will literally (not metaphorically or poetically) move into a new place in that moment of faith. We will **'cross over from death to life.'** (John 5:24) We will step off the grid of 'mortality' into 'immortality'. (2 Timothy 1:10) We will be standing in a safe place, now and forevermore. Have you stepped into the *'life that is truly life'*? (1 Tim 6:19)

Now, once we are in that space, in relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we can – and must – interface with God on behalf of others. We must **'stand in the gap'** and ask God to bring his revelation of Jesus Christ to more people. We can stand and 'pray', and name those we love, and name those places we know, and those lands that need healing, and ask God, in the name of Jesus Christ, to pour out light and revelation of his gospel message – **'the power of God for salvation.'** (Rm 1:16)

Are you standing in the gap for this hurting world? What an incredible life mission!

'I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land

so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30)

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#169 (posted 2/20/19)

Jesus Breaks Prejudice!

My belief in Jesus does not make me prejudiced towards people. On the contrary. Jesus *breaks* my prejudice, and connects me to all people. Let me explain:

So as a follower of Jesus I do have views on right and wrong – even regarding ‘lifestyle’ choices. Quite simply this is because my God, my authority, has spoken to these matters through his prophets, documented in his Scriptures. I believe in this God, and I believe the Bible is the inspired compilation of his ‘Word’. And because he speaks to ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ on certain matters, I hold to these.

So, for example, I believe ‘homosexuality’ is not OK with God. I believe it is wrong. The Scriptures are clear on this – both Old and New Testament.¹ There’s zero margin for debate. Here’s another issue: premarital sex. This is wrong. Old and New Testament, this is indisputably ‘sexual immorality’ and the Lord calls us to reject it, and repent of it. Sex is marriage.² If you ‘unify’ with someone through sex, you don’t have to discuss marriage anymore. The only issue to be discussed – or actioned – is divorce.

OK, so we’re all reeling – Heteros and Homos... we’re all in it, brothers and sisters. My idea? Absolutely not. I would prefer it to be otherwise. Biblical? Absolutely. Indisputably. God’s Word and God’s way.

So how, now, do I – holding these convictions – relate to my colleagues, neighbors, friends, family? Well, I need guidance and understanding on this, too. The same way I ‘believe’ and follow the teachings of Jesus regarding matters moral, I need to believe and follow the way of Christ in dealing with my neighbors, family and friends. I can’t accept his teaching, then

¹ 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Romans 1:25-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Leviticus 18:22

² Matthew 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 7:9

reject his 'walk'. He said, **'Follow me!'** (Mt 19:21)

Jesus did not meet people and speak directly to their sin. He didn't feel the need to proclaim his view of right and wrong in people's lives, as a pre-requisite to 'relating' to them. Does this mean he did not mind people's 'sin'? Absolutely not. His first words in the Gospel of Mark are **'Repent and believe!'** (Mark 1:15) The very purpose of his powerful miracles, as he said himself, was to show that he had **'power to forgive sins.'** (Luke 5:24) He spoke strongly and powerfully to the issue of repentance and sin – all the time. Here's another one of many: **'Unless you repent, you will perish!'** (Luke 13:5)

So here is Jesus, the author of right and wrong, so opposed to 'sin' that he died to set us free from it.³ He preached repentance. He did not shirk from the conversation. But how did he treat people? In holding such pure convictions about right and wrong, did he reject people in sin? On the contrary, he approached them. He smiled. He conversed. He went to their feasts. He truly loved them. He ached for them. He admired them. He wept at the thought and experience of their not receiving him. (Luke 19:42; Matthew 23:37)

These people, sinners, you and I – this is the very reason Jesus stepped out of heaven and sought us.⁴ So with my convictions that 'right' and 'wrong' matter, and believing repentance and faith is the call of Christ, how do I 'relate' to those around me? The same way Jesus related to me, and the way he modeled for us to relate to others.

I have 'judgments' on right and wrong, yes. Not *'pre-judgments'* (prejudices), but very solid, founded judgments based on God and his Word. But because this same God modeled for me that I can love, approach, laugh with, cry with, pray with, and share with sinners – I can be at peace. I can relax. I can be with those I do not agree with. I can work with those I do not agree with. I can love those I do not agree with.

³ 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4

⁴ Philippians 2:7; Luke 19:10

My God has authorized me to see truth, hold convictions of right and wrong, share his gospel message of repentance and faith, and yet truly love those who are in the wrong. This is how I was reached.

'While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.' (Matthew 9:10-13)

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#170 (posted 2/27/19)

#FOMO?

Do you suffer from 'FOMO'? ('Fear of Missing Out') Do you get that sinking feeling that somewhere else is where it's really going on? I got some bad news for you, and some good news...

The Bad News: You could be missing out!

OK, so if it's all about people primarily (you included), and life's general buzz, flow and 'post', then you could very well be missing out. Sorry! The party – in that respect – could be jumping around the corner, and the group selfie may already have been snapped... *So sorry!* If this is the zone, the realm, that you're concerned about, stay vigilant, stay connected, and hustle – for the rest of your life!

The Good News: Never miss out again!

To access the 'good news', your concern cannot be 'primarily people' (you included). Our concern has to be primarily God, and his truth. Look at this incredible line Jesus spoke, when on the brink of death:

'Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.' (John 18:37)

Jesus went one step further, one level deeper on this matter of truth: ***'I am the truth.'*** (John 14:6)

If this is the case, if Jesus is the Truth, and the one who *'holds the keys'* (Rev 1:18), then we need to ask ourselves not where the party's at, but where Jesus is at. ***Where is Jesus – in Spirit and Truth – in my life, my circle, my circumstances, here tonight?***

I don't want to 'miss out' on the presence of truth in my life tonight? Is Jesus here at this table, with these people, or is he

over there... Maybe he wants time with me alone? Maybe the presence of Jesus is with my loved ones, and he's pouring out 'joy' and a 'feast' on us this evening? (Ps 86:4) Where is the very Spirit of God? Am I walking in that? Or am I truly 'missing out'? Don't make the party, but miss God!

'While the people were assembled in the palace... Jesus was in the home of Simon the leper...' (Matthew 26:3,6)

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#171 (posted 3/9/19)

Become An Idol!

We crave worship. I hate putting it so bluntly, so crassly, but it is true. In fact, it was the promise to *'be like God'* that compelled us to compete with him, go against him, to reach for the forbidden. (Gen 3:5)

I love this candid, exposing quote by Nietzsche: *'If there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god? Therefore, there are no gods!'* ('Thus Spoke Zarathustra', 1885) Nietzsche's basis for atheism is that he could not endure the thought of there being a God - and him not being that God. Absolutely unbearable concept to the point of having to just deny that God exists. Period.

Think of flattery. What is it, essentially? Well, it is a form of 'worship' or 'adoration'. And there is never a time that true flattery is a good thing. Flattery is dangerous. It is not the same as a kind compliment. Why? Well, the 'spirit' is different. Flattery worships you, in order, ultimately, to be worshipped. If it is reciprocated, well, there we have a 'fraternity' or 'society' for a time. But it will not last. It will explode, implode, corrode, or disappear ***'like smoke out a window.'*** (Hs 13:3)

This is why Jesus did not allow the 'rich young ruler' to call him *'Good teacher!'* (Mark 10) Because Jesus knew this flattery was a 2-way street, and there is no 2-way street when it comes to worship and God. There is no reciprocity. God loves and honors you. But only God is safe to 'worship'.

If not God, what we worship is a type of god, an idol. Anything can be an idol - all it needs is worship. This worship does not make the idol anything special, it just makes it an idol. How do we know what we worship? Well, where's your heart? Jesus told us that our treasure - our idol - is where our heart will be. (Mt 6:21) How do you know where your heart is? Well, where's

your treasure? If your heart will be where your treasure is, where's your treasure? Where do you put your money, your thoughts, your time, your energy? That's your treasure. That's where your heart is.

'Jesus said the most important commandment is this: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength.' (Matthew 22:37 - quoting Deut 6:5)

So how do you become an idol, especially if nothing or no one is 'worshipping' you? Well, here's the interesting thing. You will become exactly like the idols you make, you worship. Again, here we see a very loving reason that God calls us to look to him, gaze on him, worship him. Because we will become like him as we gaze on him. (1 Jn 3:2) ***God calls us to worship him, so we will become like him.***

But if our heart and treasure - our 'worship' – is towards money, sexual immorality, pornography, people and status, then we will become the essence of those things:

'Those who make idols will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.' (Psalm 115:8)

We will become like that which we worship. Have you given your heart, and your worship, to Jesus?

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#172 (posted 3/30/19)

Faith Eyes

'The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!' (Matthew 6:22-23)

As a Christian, here's how I 'see' life:

I believe that Jesus is 'God with us.' (Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23)

I believe that Jesus created the world, and has authority over both the earth and the heavens. (Heb 1:2; Mt 28:18)

I believe that Jesus has 'defeated death', and by believing in him, we, too, have eternal life. (2 Tim 1:10; Jn 3:16)

I believe that the ultimate purpose and direction of life here on earth, is the eternal construction of the kingdom of God. (Mt 6:10; 1 Cor 3:13)

I believe that it is God's will that all people hear about Jesus Christ and have an opportunity to 'respond' to him personally. (Rm 10:2,14-15,17; Mt 24:14)

I believe that by the Holy Spirit, my ultimate purpose is this purpose of God's – i.e. to bring the message of Jesus to all people in all nations. (Jn 15:26-27)

I believe this is the reality of life, and life's ultimate purpose. This is how I 'see' life.

This expresses itself differently in all situations, the same way the wind blows uniquely and untraceably all the time. But the wind - the Spirit - is always present, and always blowing. (Jn 3:8)

There are good times in life, hard times, and yet in all seasons this 'gospel' of God is the ultimate 'real', the heartbeat and point of everything. (2 Tim 4:2) There are times when every person present, and every fiber of a circumstance, are hostile to this truth, this gospel of Christ. Wisdom and the Spirit will be needed. But nonetheless, these persons and circumstances will pass away, but the words of Christ, as Christ himself said, **'will never pass away.'** (Mt 24:35)

And there will come a time when **'every knee will bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.'** (Phil 2:10-11; Rm 14:11; Is 45:23)

By faith, this is how I 'see' life. I see life in this way, by faith. **'We live by faith, not by sight.'** (2 Cor 5:7) My heart has seen and known that Jesus is true, and I have put my faith in him. So I have determined to see life through Jesus, the **'life that is truly life.'** (1 Tim 6:19)

Jesus said, **'I am the light of the world, and whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'** (John 8:12)

The light in my eyes is the light of Christ. And the light that Christ throws on the land before me, is how I will see that land. I have faith eyes. And what I see, I will see through faith. That, I believe, is what is truly real.

Jesus said, **'Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'** (John 18:37)

How do you see life?

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#173 (posted 9/5/19)

'We need lights everywhere!' (Mt 5:14)

I'm blessed to have a few Christian colleagues at work. We cross paths, and at times, discuss our faith, our calling, our mission.

Yesterday I had one of those conversations with Jackie, and she said, '*We need lights everywhere!*' Jackie was referring to Christians being 'stationed' here and there and everywhere in this dark world.

Over the last few weeks I've had this 'image', this picture in my mind, of Christians as 'lights'. One lamp or light in the middle of a dark field or street, changes the whole landscape of that place! One of the most impactful things about lights in the dark, is that they stop evil from happening.

People tend to do dark deeds in the dark. You turn on a light, and behavior changes. People don't want their bad behavior to be seen, so where there is light, less bad things happen. When there is a power outage in a city, for example, and street lights and shop lights and house lights go off – crime surges! Lights protect people and places.

This is why a '*lamp under a bowl*' is such a tragic loss. That area stays dark, people stay 'lost', and people get hurt. Ask the Lord today if you – a light of God – are situated where you need to be, and shining bright – as is your call and destiny.

'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:14-16)

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Temptation: 2 Points

#1. Pray it's kept out of your way:

One line in the famous 'Lord's prayer', is: '**...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...**' (Mt 6:13) Some temptation you will not be able to resist, and so you pray – always – that the Lord will lead you away from such pressure. You know – and therefore you pray – that some things just will not cross your path, your screen, your workplace, your work conference, your hotel, your text message... Jesus instructed us to ask this of the Lord, to pray that our steps will be led away from temptation.

#2. Change your way:

So what happens when you do encounter temptation? Well, if despite your honest discipline above, in asking God to steer you clear of this pressure, you do find yourself in vulnerable and tempting situations or moments – *you turn and walk*. You resist. If it is a physical place that is the problem, you leave that place. If it is a thought, you replace it decidedly with other thoughts and 'words' – often helped by reading the Bible, locking on to a key verse, and repeating it over and over in your head until you fall into sweet and holy sleep. If it's texts, stop. If it's calls, drop 'em. We are responsible, my friends, for our responses to temptation.

Check out this key verse and ponder:

'No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.' (1 Cor 10:13)

We need God's power and Spirit in our lives to resist temptation, and walk in forgiveness and freedom.

Do you need a fresh start with God? For more information visit:
FIRST STEPS at: <https://1peter1three.weebly.com/first-steps.html>

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/temptation-2-points>



#175 (posted 12/30/19)

153 fish... & Merry Christmas!

Dear Friends, another year draws to a close – Praise God! One year closer to walking streets of gold!:) Yes, we love the life God has given us, but it doesn't take much before, like Abraham, we set our hope on that city **'with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.'** (Heb 11:10)

I often think about the *'miraculous catch of fish'* in John chapter 21, and how it actually details the number caught: 153. (John 21:11) The disciples must have counted them. They must have valued every one, taken none for granted. With a 'large haul' it can be easy to lose sight of the value of each item, but not in this case.

The disciples had been fishing all night, without catching anything. ***Do you feel like that in your witness?*** Do you feel weary, like you have loved and believed in Jesus, but not seen much fruit, not seen much impact? The disciples had also just gone through a violent few days, losing Jesus to crucifixion and fearing for their own lives. They had fear and sorrow. Do you feel fear in this life, sorrow? I often get overwhelmed at the sin and suffering of this world, the violence and avarice of the human heart, my own heart! I sometimes sink to the floor and just cry to God, asking him why, asking him how I fight this, how I can reach people, save people, be part of the victorious wind of Christ sweeping this dark world... (Hab 2:14)

Against a dark night of catching nothing, a dark season of fear and sorrow, we would value every 'catch', every single soul and shred of true light. We would count every 'fish', take nothing and no God-given provision for granted...

Here's the amazing thing: Jesus focuses in on the 'one'. He says, ***'Where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, I am with you there.'*** (Mt 18:20) He leaves the 99, and seeks the 1. (Luke 15) After a powerful, history-shaking defeat of death, he meets

alone with 2 people (not 2000 people) on a long walk, and walks with them, talks to them, takes time to commune deeply... (Luke 24) In Jesus, the beauty of the 153 fish is not the 'total number', but each and every fish in the count. Every fish matters, every soul, every quiet, even 'secret' moment with Christ, who **'is all, and is in all.'** (Col 3:11; Mt 6:4)

You, my friend, are the 'one'. Never lost in a crowd, never just part of a 'grand total'. Jesus leaves the rest of us, to rest with you. Spend some precious, quiet, meaningful time just being with Jesus. Just sit with him, and sigh. For this *'alone time'* with you, he came, lived, died, and rose again. In many respects, my friend, you are the reason for the season!:)

Merry Christmas, my friends! May the Lord give you a peace that passes understanding these next days, and a fresh vision of his own – and your own – eternal inheritance!

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<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/153-fish-merry-christmas>



#176 (posted 1/4/20)

Seeing

I was stirred by the story of Jesus healing the blind man in Mark 8:22-26. What impacted me was the space, the 'identity', in which the man found himself afterwards.

Jesus gives him sight through a messy process (spitting in his face), with 2 phases – partially seeing, then fully seeing. This 'process' is worth deep, meditative consideration in itself, but is not my focus here.

Jesus enacted this miracle in private, alone with the man. He heard of the need while in a crowd (in the village), but led him away, outside of the village, to connect with him, heal him, meet his need. And this 'alone space' with Christ, led to yet another 'alone space'...

Jesus sent this man on his way, and told him to not tell anyone. He had just received sight, been completely redefined, reborn, and was called by God to be alone with God, not 'reveal' this to people. Essentially, in order to do this, this man could not be around people. Touched by God, and then alone with God.

When we are truly touched, defined by God, nothing around us is as important as what is *in* us, what we *are*. When you see Jesus, and step through his 'door' (John 10:9), you are saved and safe for all eternity. You become in that moment more enduring than the world around you, more lasting than the ground beneath your feet. The world in that moment, bows to you, even '*groans for you to be revealed*' in all your wonder and glory! (Romans 8:19-20)

When the blind man had received his sight, I imagine him alone, outside the village, seeing. Not getting caught up and worried about what he saw, but just lost in the wonder that he was now a '*seeing man*' – now and forevermore.

Do you 'see' and believe in Jesus? My friend, that is a wondrous miracle! You are a '*seeing being*'. You are saved, and safe.

'God, who made light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ.'

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

'In your light, we see light.' (Psalm 36:9)

Available online at:

<https://1peter1three.weebly.com/blog/seeing>



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