

Ordinary
by
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Part 1-Radical and Restless

- I. The New Radical
 - A. Growing restless with restlessness.
 - B. Dominance of the Next Big Thing in society filtering down to Christian subculture.
 - C. Everydayness is a problem.
 - 1. Afraid of being bored.
 - D. American Christianity is a story of perpetual waves of upheavals in churches and individual lives.
 - 1. Excessive waves of enthusiasm.
 - 2. Fates of recent radical movements.
 - a. Angelus Temple and Sister Aimee Semple MacPherson, pioneer of church of Vaudeville.
 - 1.) Caught up in alleged kidnapping scandal.
 - b. Calvary Chapel and the Jesus Movement.
 - 1.) Many recent scandals and future of Moses Model with death of leader Chuck Smith
 - c. TBN and Schuller's Crystal Cathedral.
 - 1.) Declared Bankruptcy and later joined with the Roman Catholic Church
 - d. Saddleback Community Church and Rick Warren
 - E. Boomer generation began looking outward.
 - 1. From "change your life" to "change the world".
 - 2. Show impatience and disdain for the ordinary.
 - 3. Problem is not that we are too active, but that we are recklessly frenetic.
 - 4. Danger of burnout.
 - F. An excuse to be comfortable.
 - 1. Disdain for mediocrity.
 - 2. Challenge to our addiction to comfort.
 - G. Quantity time.
 - 1. Not a compensation for extended absence.
 - 2. Downplaying the mundane experience in church life.
 - a. Fellowship
 - b. The ordinary conversion experience.
 - c. Saved vs. Spirit-filled.
 - 3. It's the ordinary ministry week-in and week out that provides sustained growth and encourages the roots to grow deep.
 - 4. If the big movements in our Christian life are produced big movements in the evangelistic world, the ordinary local church will seem pretty irrelevant.
 - 5. ***[2 Timothy 2:13]- If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.***
 - 6. *"One isn't just saved, but gloriously saved."*
 - H. Each new movement eventually becomes ordinary.
 - 1. Charismatic movement.

2. Evangelism explosion.
3. Shepherding movement.
4. Christian right.
5. Christian left.
6. Church growth movement.
7. Emphasis on Spiritual disciplines.
8. Emergent movement.
9. New Calvinism.

II. Ordinary isn't mediocre.

A. The Warping of Excellence.

1. Something essentially good gone wrong.
2. Something God made that we corrupted.
3. Essence of sin, "*curved in on ourselves*" – Augustine.
4. *We use God's gifts as weapons in the service of our mutiny against Him and each other.*

B. True excellence.

1. Have others in mind-first God and then our neighbor.
 - a. ***[1 Corinthians 10:31]- Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.***
2. Measuring excellence by God's standards.
 - a. ***[Galatians 5:22]- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,***
 - b. *The fruits of the Spirit are cultivated in the fertile soil of the Gospel.*
3. The object determines the fruit of excellence. Only the worthiness of the object can sustain long-term excellence.
4. Jesus also had a big goal.
 - a. Outcome was certain.
 - b. Outcome was grounded in the covenant made between the Persons of the Trinity before the foundation of the world.
 - c. Jesus the Son was given a people.
 - d. As their Mediator, He became flesh to redeem His people from a condition in which they had plunged themselves.
 - e. Upon ascending unto the place of all authority, He and His Father sent the Spirit to gather His people from every tribe into one holy nation.
 - f. He gave His people a mission statement.
 - 1.) ***[Matthew 28:19-20]- Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.***
 - g. Man's inability to obtain goals.
 - 1.) We may be discouraged by the circumstances on the ground, in our own churches and denominations.
 - 2.) We may choose a goal but lack the commitment to sustain growth, setting ourselves up for failure.
 - 3.) Taking God's glory out of the equation.
 - a.) ***[1 Corinthians 10:31]- Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.***
 - 4.) Excellence cannot be obtained by lone rangers.
 - a.) Why Christ places us in the local expression of His visible body.

- b.) We do not need more conferences and seminars; we need more churches where the Spirit is immersing sinners into Christ day by day.

C. Excellence vs. Perfectionism.

1. Excellence is a virtue when it's God's glory and our neighbor's good in view.
2. For aspiring perfectionists, the craving for approval can paralyze them from receiving God's mercy and serving their neighbors in simple-and imperfect ways.
3. For deluded perfectionists, success has the opposite effect: to intoxicate them with the illusion of self-justification.
4. When there is justification in Christ alone, there is freedom to love and serve others in ordinary and unheralded ways.
5. ***[Luke 14:8-14,23-24,33]- When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.***
6. Being ordinary means that we reject the idolatry of pursuing excellence for selfish reasons.
7. ***[Romans 12:1]- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***

D. The Call to Action.

1. To have an active faith.
2. Difference between frenetic activism and faithful activity.
3. Doctrine of "grace alone"
 - a. Not license to do nothing only to do nothing to gain righteousness.
 - b. Not license to do nothing only to do nothing to raise others or us from spiritual death.
 - 1.) ***[Ephesians 2:8-9]- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***
 - c. Not license to do nothing only to do nothing to have forgiveness from sins.
 - 1.) ***[Romans 1.16]- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***
 - d. Other proof texts.
 - 1.) ***[2 Corinthians 4:5]- For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.***
 - 2.) ***[Acts 17:25]- Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;***
 - 3.) ***[Romans 11:35-36]- Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.***
 - 4.) ***[James 1:17]- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.***

- 5.) *[Romans 8:23]- And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*
 - 6.) *[Romans 8:11-15]- But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*
 - 7.) *[Ephesians 2:1]- And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*
 - 8.) *[Romans 12:1-2]- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*
4. Gospel produces peace and empowers us to live by faith.
- a. *[Romans 7:14-15,25]- For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*
 - b. *[Romans 2:1]- Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*
 - c. *[Philippians 4:18]- But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*
 - d. *[Hebrews 13:16]- But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*
 - e. *[1 Peter 2:5]- Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*
 - f. *[Colossians 1:10-14]- That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*
 - g. *[2 Corinthians 5:9]- Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*
 - h. *[Colossians 3:3]- For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*
 - i. *[Luke 10:27]- And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

III. The Young and the Restless.

A. Young is restless.

1. Fascinated by newness of everything and everything is interesting.
2. Children are trusting and gullible.
3. As we mature, expectations change and usually by trial and error.

B. Growing up.

1. Called to enter the Kingdom like children.
 - a. *[Matthew 18.3]- And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
 - b. *[Luke 18:16]- But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

2. Through their ministry, pastor-teachers are helping those to mature, building up in the body of Christ.
 - a. *[Ephesians 4.12-14]- For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*
 - b. *[2 Peter 3: 17-18]- Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

3. Characteristics of young adulthood that should have an important place in the life of the church.
 - a. Virtues turn to vices.
 - 1.) Suspicion of authority.
 - 2.) Overconfidence.
 - 3.) Restless and rootless drifting.
 - 4.) Anxiety over making commitment.
 - 5.) A shallow and self centered spirituality.
 - 6.) *[1 Corinthians 3:1-9]- And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*
 - 7.) *[1 Corinthians 14.20]- Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

4. Press on.
 - a. *[Philippians 3.12-16]- Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*
 - b. *[Colossians 1:28-29]- Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

- c. *[Hebrews 5:11-14]- Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
5. Powers of discernment trained by constant practice.
 6. Leaving behind a restless spirit.
 7. "If we fail to mature, apostasy is a real danger."
 - a. *[Hebrews 6:1-2]- Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*
 8. Wisdom comes with age.
 - a. *[1 Timothy 4:12-14]- Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*
 9. Self control.
 - a. *[Titus 2:2-6,15]- That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*
 10. Humility.
 - a. *[1 Peter 5:2-5]- Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*
- C. God's generation and ours.
1. *[Acts 2:39]- For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*
 2. Older and wiser teach and guide the younger.
 - a. *[Exodus 12:26-27]- And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.*
 - b. *[Revelation 5:9]- And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*
 - c. *[Galatians 3:28]- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- d. *[Hebrews 12:1]- Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*
3. "The church is always one generation from apostasy."
 4. Continuity is the covenantal approach to generations; novelty is the decree of our age.
 - a. *[Exodus 15:2]- The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.*
- D. The Hedonist paradox.
1. *[1 Corinthians 15:32]- If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*
 2. Our age more akin to Stoicism.
 3. A problem with our pursuit of the next great experience is our attempts to feed our insatiable appetite for significance.
 4. Happiness needs a worthy object.
- E. We want it all: Autonomy and Community.
1. New generations having more intense struggle with this inner contradiction between autonomy and community.
 2. Wiki-the Hawaiian word for quick.
- F. Deep sea diving in a Jet Ski age.
1. We are rising a generation of deluded narcissists.
 2. Two easy responses to technological innovations embrace it or reject it.
 3. Evangelicals have a tendency to embrace popular culture.
 4. Despite their fondness for theological novelty, liberal Protestantism is typically indebted to high culture with its conservative suspicion of technology.
 5. Part of growing up is developing discernment.
 - a. Wisdom discerns not just between good from bad, but between better and best.
 6. The spoken word as a medium for socializing.
 - a. God spoke the world into being.
 - 1.) *[Psalm 33.6]- By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*
 - b. Jesus is the Word of God.
 - 1.) *[John 6.63]- It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*
 - c. Faith comes from hearing.
 - 1.) *[Romans 10.17]- So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
 - d. Born again through the preaching of the gospel.
 - 1.) *[Romans 1.16]- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
 - 2.) *[Ephesians 1.13-14]- In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*
 - 3.) *[1 Thessalonians 1.5]- For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

- 4.) *[1 Peter 1.23]- Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*
- 5.) *[James 1.18]- Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

- 7. On one hand, we are addicted to distractions (euphemistically called multi-tasking). On the other hand, all of the clicking, cutting and pasting, ... creates a deeper thirst for something more meaningful.
- 8. We also have an addiction to instantaneous results and immediate gratification.
- 9. These movements that wash over us are largely determined by the attachments of evangelicalism to pop culture.
 - a. It may be exciting for the moment, but it is not sustainable and it does not serve well an intergenerational covenant of grace.
 - b. The need for zeal *and* knowledge.
- 1.) *[Jude 1.3]- Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*
- 10. The key to maturity is time and community.

IV. The Next Big Thing.

- A. "The horror of the same old thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart." C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters.
 - 1. Fashion, novelty, and change will certainly produce an insatiable desire for, ironically, more of the same.
 - 2. It diminishes pleasure while increasing desire.
 - 3. The pleasure of novelty is by its nature more subject than any other to the law of diminishing returns.
 - 4. The game is to have them running around with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood, and all crowding to that side of the boat, which is already nearly gunwale under.
 - 5. Challenge in the church is to maintain peace and unity.
 - a. *[Ephesians 4.3]- Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
 - 6. "The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected." – G.K. Chesterton
 - a. *[1 Thessalonians 5.21]- Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*
- B. The Next Big Thing is a tradition.
 - 1. Non-denomination evangelicalism.
 - 2. Radical Christianity go beyond common beliefs of Reformers.
 - a. The Supremacy of God's Word though the Spirit illumines the Church.
 - 1.) The visible church is false and the invisible church of the born again and Spirit filled must reinvent the church of Acts.
 - b. Every believer is a priest though God also appointed pastors and teachers.
 - 1.) Every true believer is a minister and may preach, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper.
 - c. God alone saves though He also instituted ordinary means of grace like preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper.
 - 1.) The Spirit works directly and immediately, often through extraordinary means.
- C. Longing for Revival.

1. Two approaches to understanding revival.
 - a. A surprising work of God. Extraordinary blessings on God's ordinary means of grace.
 - b. Not a miracle but a method. Something within man's control.
 - c. *"Many today think like Edwards but act like Finney."*
 2. *"Many reasons we offer for needing revival (lethargy in evangelism and missions, lack of heartfelt experience in God's grace, coldness in prayer, rising vice and infidelity, social evils, etc) are problems that the ordinary ministry is supposed to address each week."*
 3. First approach: revival as God's extraordinary blessing on God's ordinary means of grace
- D. Conversion and covenantal nurture.
1. Conversion and covenantal nurture go hand in hand in Scripture.
 - a. ***[Acts 2:39]- For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.***
 2. Converts brought their whole household under the covenantal promises.
 - a. Through baptism.
 - 1.) ***[Acts 16:14-15,31]- And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.***
 - 2.) ***[I Corinthians 1:16]- And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.***
 - b. Children of believers are holy, set apart by God's promise.
 - 1.) ***[I Corinthians 7:14]- For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.***
 - c. Some children will reject their birthright, therefore establishing the existence of a birthright.
 - 1.) ***[Hebrews 12:16]- Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.***
 - 2.) ***[Hebrews 6:1-9]- Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.***
 - d. Children also fall under warnings of apostasy.
 - e. Those who belong to Christ are Abraham's *spiritual* offspring, heirs of the covenant promise.
 - 1.) ***[Romans 4:16-17]- Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that***

- also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*
- 2.) *[Galatians 3:6-9,14,28]- Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*
 - 3.) *[Galatians 4:30]- Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.*
- f. Children of believers were heirs and therefore received God's sign and seal of His promise.
- 1.) Was sacrament of circumcision in the old covenant (males only) and is baptism in the new covenant (males and females).
 - 2.) Responding to God's promise, parents-and indeed the whole church-vow to raise their children in the covenant, thus shaping the entire outlook of the church in its ministry.
 - 3.) There is an expectation that their children will come to profess faith publicly before the elders, and this will be ratified by their being welcomed to the Lord's Table.
- g. *And to all that are afar off....*
- 1.) The church cannot be a secret society, closed in on itself.
 - 2.) We cannot choose between a maintenance ministry and a missional ministry.
 - 3.) The mission of the church is to announce and apply the promise to those within and those outside.
 - 4.) Evangelism requires preaching, baptism, and instruction in *everything* Christ taught and commanded.
 - a.) *[Matthew 28:18-20]- And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
- 5.) Reformers saw conversion as a lifelong process of growing and deepening repentance and faith in Christ.
- a.) This was not enough for radical Protestants.
 - b.) If you believe that genuine conversion is always a definable, radical, even datable moment, you will be inclined to look for obvious moments of revival that were radical breakthroughs on a wider scale.
 - c.) If you believe that the Spirit's work in conversion is mysterious and varies in its outward evidences from person to person, through the same ordinary ministry, you will be less likely to have lists of discernable experiences and evidences to which each must conform. You will rejoice with those who experience an obvious moment of conversion and also with those who come gradually to recognize that they belong to Christ.
 - d.) Repentance and faith are not a one-time experience, but are part of a lifelong process that has ups and downs along the way.
 - e.) The most important thing to keep our eye on is not religious experience itself, but the faithful ministry of God's means of grace.

- E. How was church today?
1. What happens at church through ordinary means in ordinary services of ordinary churches on ordinary weeks is not itself ordinary.
 - a. God meets with His people.
 - b. God judges and justifies.
 - c. God draws sinners and gathers His sheep to His Son by His Word and Spirit.
 - d. God unites His people to Christ.
 - e. God bathes His people and feeds them.
 - f. God teaches His people and tends them along their pilgrim way.
 - g. God expands His empire even as He deepens it.
 - h. It is through this divinely ordained event that “the powers of the age to come” penetrate into the darkest crevices of this passing evil age.
 - 1.) ***[Hebrews 6:3-6]- And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.***
 2. The response from churches of the Reformation.
 - a. “Well it was one more nail in the coffin of the old Adam.”
 - b. “God absolved me.”
 3. Analogy of the marriage relationship.
 - a. It is in the daily grind that we have to die to ourselves, loving and serving one another.
 - b. We are both sinners and sinned against, perpetrators and victims-simultaneously.
 - c. Breakthroughs in a marriage reflect an impatience with-perhaps even misunderstanding of-marriage itself.
 - d. Even if breakthroughs come, they come unexpected and unbidden and usually, through ordinary means.
 4. Complaints of Christians in the ordinary church looking for the extraordinary.
 - a. They lament their church situation yet did not rank “a solid church” at the top of their list in evaluating a move to a new city.
 - b. They may attend the right conferences and read the right books but are a thorn in the side of their pastor and fellow members.
 - c. They blame the church for it’s failure to feed them yet do not set aside the Lord’s Day at all and fill the day with something other than the means of grace and the fellowship of the saints.
 5. God shows us the three marks of the church, no more and no less.
 - a. Preaching the Gospel.
 - b. Baptizing
 - c. Discipline.
 - d. ***[Matthew 28:19-20]- Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.***

V. Ambition: How a vice became a virtue.

A. Ambition as a vice.

1. Ambition could mean simply a drive or initiative, nothing more natural to us as God’s image-bearers.

2. Adam's example shows the vice in ambition. He declared independence from his King causing rivalry and self-assertion-first between Adam and Eve and then between Cain and Abel.
3. Jesus Christ's example of leaving His throne and descended to our misery.
 - a. *[Philippians 2:6-10]- Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*
4. With Adam's example, we live unnatural lives.
 - a. Our love becomes unhinged from its proper object-God's glory and our neighbor's good.
 - b. Our love becomes self focused.
 - c. Our holy passions become vicious.
 - d. We drive ourselves away from God's approaching steps and away from each other.
 - e. We live as if God and our neighbors were made for us.
 - f. *[Romans 3: 23-24]- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*
 - g. *[Romans 1:21]- Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

B. Ambition in Scripture.

1. Philosophy and Medicine terms.
 - a. Eritheia-putting oneself forward as in an election.
 - b. Erythema-redness as in inflammation.
2. Our positive evaluation of humility is due entirely to the dawn of the new age in Christ.
 - a. *[Philippians 2.3-5]- Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*
 - b. *[James 3:13-18]- Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*
 - c. *[2 Timothy 3:2-5]- For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*
 - d. *[Galatians 5:19-26]- Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the*

flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

- e. *[Romans 15:20]- Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:*
- f. *[Romans 1:15]- So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*
- g. *[1 Thessalonians 4:11-12]- And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.*
- h. *[1 Corinthians 12:7]- ut the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*
- i. *[1 Corinthians 12: 15-23]- If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*
- j. *[1 Corinthians 12:25-26]- That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*
- k. *[Galatians 6:2]- Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*
- l. *[1 Peter 4:8]- And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

C. Melted Wings and How a Vice became a Virtue.

1. Icarus flying to close to the sun.
2. Ambrose calls ambition a "hidden plaque".
3. Augustine warned that it was a "craving to dominate".
4. Thomas Aquinas identified ambition unequivocally as a sin.
5. In pointing to the clouds on the horizon: "And a new philosophy calls all in doubt."- John Donne in Anatomy of the World.
6. Ambition is a focal point for something that creates within us-especially in our younger years-a tension between self and community.
7. *[Luke 22:24-34]- And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."*

D. Death and Resurrection, Not a Makeover.

1. Passionate drives can be godly or ungodly, but ambition cannot be channeled into good directions or harnessed for noble ends.
2. *“The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect. To the self-assertive it says, ‘Come and assert yourself for Christ.’ To the egotist it says, ‘Come and do your boasting in the Lord.’ To the thrill-seeker it says, ‘Come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship.’ The Christian message is slanted in the direction of the current vogue in order to make it acceptable to the public.”* A.W. Tozer

VI. Practicing what we preach-no more super apostles.

A. Paul and the Super Apostles.

1. *The Ambitious Apostles*

- a. *[Luke 22:24-27]- And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*
- b. *[Luke 22:29-30]- And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- c. *[Ephesians 4:7]- But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

2. *The Ambitious Churches.*

- a. *[1 Corinthians 11:19]- For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*
- b. *[Romans 16:17]- Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*
- c. *[1 Corinthians 1:10]- Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*
- d. *[Titus 3:10]- A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*
- e. *[Jude 19]- These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*
- f. *[2 Corinthians 11:4-6]- For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.*
- g. *[2 Corinthians 11:12-13]- But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*
- h. *[2 Corinthians 4:5-7]- For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*
- i. *[1 Corinthians 11:1]- Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*
- j. *[1 Corinthians 3:5]- Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*
- k. *[1 Timothy 6:2-5]- And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus*

Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

3. Proper church order in marked contrast to the self-made and self-authorized teacher gathering admirers.
 - a. *[Galatians 1:12,16-18]- For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them, which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*
 - b. *[1 Timothy 6:20-21]- O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.*
 - c. *[1 Timothy 4:14]- Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*
 - d. *[2 Timothy 3:1-9]- This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.*
 - e. *[2 Timothy 1:14]- That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*
 - f. *[1 Timothy 6:11-12]- But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*
4. We need more Timothys and less “would-be” Pauls in the church.
5. Moses model of Ministry.
 - a. Rebellion against formal structures and church offices (even membership).
 - b. Evolve into a virtually papal hierarchy.
 - c. Identify leader as an apostle and internal criticism is rebuffed with the warning, “*Touch not the Lord’s anointed.*”
 - d. Each model overlooks the qualitative difference between the extraordinary ministry of the apostles and the ordinary ministry of those who follow them.
 - 1.) *[1 Corinthians 3:10-11]- According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*
 - 2.) *[Ephesians 2:20]- And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*
 - 3.) *[1 Corinthians 3:12-15]- Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built*

thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

- 4.) *[Ephesians 4:11-14]- And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*
- 5.) *[Matthew 25:31-46]- When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*
 - a.) Notice the work that the sheep did.
 - b.) Goats question where they may have seen Jesus doing these things.
 - c.) "Lord, did we not...?" and "Lord, when did we...?"

B. Idolizing our leaders.

1. *[Hebrews 13:7]- Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*
2. Respect-even reverence-for their office and ministry.
3. Focus on the Word of God that they spoke.
4. During the first Great Awakening, a pastor who did not support the movement and encourage members to attend the meetings was suspect.
5. Preference to lynch fellow shepherds via social media than to submit to each other and address concerns face to face
 - a. *[1 Corinthians 14:40]- Let all things be done decently and in order.*
6. Jesus did not establish a movement, a tribe, or a school, but a church.
 - a. *[2 Timothy 1:13-14]- Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*

C. Reining In versus Reigning In Ambition.

1. Part of a culture that is losing any sense of respect for office.

2. Title of “Pastor” has dropped out of ordinary conversation.
 3. Pressure for pastors to be persons we like.
 4. *“the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God... the Word itself which is preached is to be regarded, not the minister that preaches; for even if he be evil and a sinner, nevertheless the Word of God remains still true and good.”* – Second Helvetic Confession.
- D. Only Christ has a Legacy.
1. His Death.
 - a. *[Matthew 26:28]- For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*
 - b. *[Hebrews 9:16-18]- For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.*
 2. His Ministry dispensing from Heaven by His Word and Spirit.
 - a. *[Ephesians 4:7-13]- But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*
 3. Danger of shifting our focus from the ministry to the ministers.
 - a. Multi-site churches.
 - 1.) Model is more susceptible to a greater focus on the minister than on the ministry
 - 2.) *[John 10:27]- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*
 - b. Itinerancy- traveling from place to place.
 - c. Argument for Presbytery convictions.
 - 1.) *[Exodus 24:9]- Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:*
 - 2.) *[Acts 14:23]- And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*
 - 3.) *[I Timothy 5:17, 22]- Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*
 - 4.) *[Titus 1:5]- For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:*
 - 5.) *[James 5:14]- Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*
 - 6.) *[I Peter 5:1]- The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*
 - 7.) *[Revelation 4:4]- And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*
 - 8.) *[I Timothy 3:1-13]- This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- 9.) *[1 Timothy 1:6-9]- From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,*
- 10.) *[1 Timothy 4:14]- Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*
- 11.) *[Acts 15: 22,30] Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:*
- 12.) *[Acts 16:4-5]- And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

E. Fear not, little flock.

1. *[Matthew 16:18]- And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
2. *[Hebrews 12:32]- Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*
3. *[Luke 12:32]- Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*
4. *[2 Corinthians 4:5,7]- For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Part 2-Ordinary and Content.

VII. Contentment.

A. The cure for selfish ambition and restless devotion.

1. The Gospel is truly radical.
 - a. *[Romans 1:16]- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
2. The Gospel keeps our eyes fixed on Christ.

B. Sustainability.

1. We should all be in favor of growth-both in numbers and in quality, in our personal lives and as churches.
 2. Disagreements emerge over what growth means and how it is sustained.
- C. Avarice: Ambition's twin.
1. If ambition has been converted from a vice to a virtue, contentment has been transformed from virtue to a vice.
 2. Contentment has come to mean settling for second best.
 3. Lacking sufficient ambition, one is content to be something less.
 4. No longer turned outward to God in faith and to our neighbors in love, our fallen race has become, if not Icarus, then Narcissus-being lured to the pond by Nemesis to look at his own reflection.
 5. Something similar to ambition (the love for praise) happened to avarice (the lust for wealth).
 6. Just as ambition can be adapted to a gospel of self-esteem, avarice can be "sanctified" as a prosperity gospel.
- D. Covenant, not contract.
1. A contractual way of thinking.
 - a. Begin with the assumption that you are a sovereign individual.
 - b. Sovereign individuals cede some of their autonomy to the state in exchange for goods and services.
 2. A covenantal way of thinking.
 - a. God is the sovereign Creator and Lord.
 - b. We do not start from a position of autonomy.
 - c. We go to church because we want to, we have close relationships because we desire the company of the other person.
 3. Scriptures reveal God's covenant.
 - a. Not only the original covenant of law with humanity in Adam but a covenant of grace after the fall.
 - 1.) ***[Genesis 3:15]- And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.***
 - b. Not only Cain's line of ambitious founders of culture, but Seth's line as well.
 - 1.) ***[Genesis 4:26]- And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.***
 - c. Acknowledgement of Yahweh not only as the covenant Lord who owned them by right of creation (signified by a tithe of produce from their labors), but by the right of redemption (signified by animal sacrifice).
 - d. God the Father and the Son instituted and accomplished the covenant.
 - 1.) ***[John 15:16]- Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.***
 - 2.) ***[Revelation 5:9]- And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;***
 - 3.) ***[Romans 8:33]- Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.***
 4. Imagine the difference that a covenantal way of thinking could make in our views
 - a. Church membership.
 - b. Marriage and family life.

- c. Workplace and neighborhood.
 - d. Every relationship becomes a gift and responsibility that we accept as God's choice and will for our good and His glory.
- E. Content with our Father.
1. Contentment in our King.
 - a. *[Psalm 24:1]- The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
 2. Contentment in our Father.
 - a. *[Matthew 6:31-33]- Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
 - b. *[Matthew 11:28]- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
 - c. *[Luke 11:9-13]- And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*
 - d. God doesn't only command us, but He gives us a reason to be content.
 - 1.) *[Romans 8:30-37, 39]- Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - 2.) *[Hebrews 13:5-6]- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*
- F. Content with Christ and His Kingdom.
1. God established in creation an economy of mutual gift exchange. Man and woman were created for the other, not as a tool in the will to power, but as a gift in the circulation of loving and serving relationships.
 2. God created the church, not simply a natural covenant of human interdependence, but a covenant of grace, where we forgive as God has first forgiven us.
 3. Christ's Kingdom is extraordinary.
 - a. In its benefits.
 - b. In the way of life it creates.
 - c. In its identity-Christ Himself. Our identities are no longer the nuclear family, but the family of God.

- d. *[1 Timothy 6:6-12]- But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*
 - e. *[1 Timothy 6:17-21]- Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.*
 - f. *[2 Corinthians 12:7]- And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*
 - g. *[Philippians 4:12-13]- I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*
 - h. *[Philippians 4:14-20]- Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
- G. Content with His ordinary means of Working in Creation and Providence.
1. *[1 Corinthians 2:9]- But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*
 2. Many will turn out for a prosperity evangelist's promise of signs and wonders. But how many of us think that God's greatest signs and wonders are being done every week through the ordinary means of preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper?
 3. God uses means in creation.
 - a. The initial creation was a direct and immediate effect of God's command.
 - 1.) *[Genesis 1:1-3, 6-13]- In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind,*

whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

- b. Not only a process, but also a natural process.
 - 1.) Natural does not cancel divine activity.
 - 2.) Natural processes are neither the ultimate cause nor useless.
 - 3.) God is commanding the natural process, surveying it, and pronouncing it good.
 - 4.) The Spirit works within creation to bring forth its fruit-bearing response to the Father's summons.

a.) *[Genesis 1:20-24]- And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

4. God uses means in Providence.

- a. Birth of a child.
- b. Our daily bread.
- c. Ordinary vocation of non-Christians.
 - 1.) *"If we regard the Spirit of God s the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it whenever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in such slight esteem, we condemn and reproach the Spirit Himself."* – John Calvin
 - 2.) *[Psalm 104:27-30]- These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*
 - 3.) *[Matthew 5:45]- That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*
 - 4.) *[Acts 14:17]- Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*
 - 5.) *[Acts 17:26-27]- And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*
 - 6.) *[Romans 13:1-7]- Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

- H. Content with His ordinary way of working in Redemption.
1. The Incarnation of the Son.
 - a. Creation upheld in Him
 - 1.) *[Colossians 1:16-17]- For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*
 - b. His life displays examples of God's ordinary providence.
 - 1.) *[Luke 1:34-35, 38]- Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*
 - 2.) *[Luke 2:40, 52]- And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*
 - 3.) *[Hebrews 5:8]- Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*
 - 4.) *[Galatians 4:4]- But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*
 - c. In His life and ministry, Jesus was dependent of the Holy Spirit as He fulfilled His Father's Word.
 - 1.) *[Matthew 12:28, 31-32]- But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*
 - 2.) *[Luke 12:10]- And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.*
 - 3.) *[Acts 2:2-4, 38]- And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*
 - 4.) *[Romans 10:14-15, 17]- How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
 - 5.) *[1 Corinthians 10:15-17]- I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

- 6.) *[Romans 10:6-8, 17]- But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
- 7.) *[2 Timothy 1:13]- Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*
- 8.) *[Colossians 2:12]- Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*
- 9.) *[1 Corinthians 10:16]- The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

I. Content in the Gospel.

1. Contentment grounded in the Gospel.

- a. *“I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.” – Martin Luther*
- b. *[Ephesians 1:3-4, 7-14]- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

VIII. We Don’t Need Another Hero.

A. Be wary of making Biblical characters heroic.

1. Their stories don’t glamorize
2. We see how the New Testament interprets these stories.
 - a. [1 Corinthians 10.]-
 - b. [Hebrews 11.]-
3. We must read these episodes in the light of the whole plot of Scripture.
4. We may also recruit others such as founding fathers or other national heroes.
5. Use of contemporary celebrity athletes and entertainers who “know the Lord”.

B. Ordinary callings: Cultural transformation or loving Service?

1. The call to radical transformation of society can easily distract faith’s gaze from Christ and focus on ourselves.
 - a. [John 1:29]- The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
2. Radical views of cultural transformation actually harm our callings in the world.
3. Despite its affirmation of our callings in the world, the call to change the world undervalues ordinary vocations that actually keep God’s gifts circulating.

4. The call to radical transformation of society can feed a spiritualized version of upward mobility.
 5. The cultural-transforming mission can backfire in the other direction, against those who are in fact called to be novelists, painters, physicists, senators, and academics.
- C. Reforming our theology of culture.
1. We are living in the time between Christ's two advents: the "already" and the "not yet".
 - a. ***[Romans 8:24-25]- For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.***
 2. We are citizens of God's new creation in Christ., but we are also citizens of the common kingdoms and cultures in which God's providence has placed us.
 - a. ***[Matthew 16:18]- And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***
 - b. ***[Hebrews 12:28]- Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:***
 - c. ***[Luke 12:32]- Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.***
 - d. ***"The question is not whether God rules over the kingdoms over the earth right now, but how He reigns over His church through saving grace and over earthly powers through common grace."***
 - e. ***"In the process of living out our ordinary discipleship, some may actually be called to remarkable acts of heroism and sacrificial leadership. In the course of their ordinary vocations, some may be extolled for their artistic brilliance, political labors, or scientific discoveries. It is crucial that Christians fulfill their various callings as salt and light in a tasteless and dark world. But the kingdom of Christ advances directly by the Spirit's miraculous gathering of a people around the Lamb to the glory of the Father though the ordinary means of grace."***
- D. Loving neighbors is tougher than loving causes.
1. It is easy to turn others into instruments of our ambition rather than loving them for their own sake, as fellow image bearers of God.
 - a. ***[I Corinthians 1:26-29]- For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.***
 - b. ***[I Thessalonians 4:11-12]- And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.***
- E. Ordinary people.
1. We don't need another hero. We need a Savior.
 - a. ***[Isaiah 53:2-3]- For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.***
 2. We need ordinary parents who care enough about the scads of small things each day that tend God's garden and direct them to their heavenly Father.

- a. *[John 3:16]- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
- 3. We need ordinary neighbors who play their part.
 - a. *[Ephesians 4:28]- Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

IX. God's ecosystem.

A. The Kingdom is like a garden.

1. Roman Catholics view the Kingdom of Christ as a ladder or tower with different hierarchies.
2. Anabaptists see the Kingdom of Christ as a monastery, true saints called out of the world.
3. Lutheran and Reformed churches see the Kingdom of Christ as a school.
4. Evangelicals see the Kingdom of Christ as a market.
5. God sees His Kingdom as a garden.
 - a. *[Psalm 1:3-6]- And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*
 - b. *[Isaiah 5:2-6]- And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*
 - c. *[Jeremiah 2:21]- Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?*
 - d. *[Jeremiah 12:10]- Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.*
 - e. *[Hosea 14:4-8]- I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.*
 - f. *[Matthew 3:10]- And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*
 - g. *[Matthew 13:3-9]- And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*
 - h. *[Matthew 13:24-30]- Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept,*

his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

- i. *[Matthew 13:31-32]- Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*
- j. *[Luke 13:6-9]- He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*
- k. *[Matthew 20:1]- For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.*
- l. *[Matthew 21:28-32]- But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*
- m. *[Matthew 21:33-43]- Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*
- n. *[Matthew 21:18-19]- Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.*
- o. *[John 15:1-5]- I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth*

it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

B. How does God's garden grow?

1. Patiently.
 - a. *[Isaiah 42:3]- A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*
 - b. *[Matthew 21:20]- And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!*

2. Architecturally.
 - a. *[Ephesians 2:19-22]- Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

3. Charitably
 - a. *[Ephesians 4:4-14]- There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

4. With flames.
 - a. *[Hebrews 12:29]- For our God is a consuming fire.*
 - b. *[Hebrews 12:12-24]- Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the*

firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

C. The Sabbath as God's Greenbelt.

1. The practice of worshiping on the day Jesus rose from the dead-the first day of the week-goes back to the time of the apostles.
 - a. *[Matthew 28:1]- In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*
 - b. *[Mark 16:2]- And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*
 - c. *[Luke 24:1]- Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.*
 - d. *[John 20:1]- The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.*
 - e. *[Acts 20:7]- And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*
 - f. *[1 Corinthians 16:2]- Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*
 - g. *[Revelation 1:10]- I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*
2. Many church activities on Sunday have less to do with inculcating the faith than with providing "safe" things kids to do.
3. A growing number of churches offer a menu of services on other days for convenience.
4. *"Setting aside the ordinary callings and pastimes of the week, our calling on the Lord's day is to share, together with our coheirs, in the powers of the age to come. It is not by simply emptying the day with a list of rules, but by filling it with treasure hunting, that the Christian Sabbath orients us, our families, and our fellow saints to our heavenly citizenship."*
5. The Lord's Day is not a prison but a palace.

D. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."

1. Reduce the distractions and voracious consumption.
 - a. *"We believe, rather, that it is imperative to think of moving on from the 'milk' of the Gospel to the 'meat' of the Gospel. For in fact the Gospel is more profound and multifaceted that our finite minds can even grasp. We never move on from the Gospel; we move on in the Gospel."*
2. Reuse the resources that God has given us from the past.
 - a. Forms the frame the public service-common prayer, praise, and confession-are ways of thoughtfully drawing on Scripture so that Christ's Word dwells in all of us richly.
 - b. A trellis does not make a vine grow, but it does make it grow in the right direction.
 - c. The Psalms train our hearts to pour out sorrowful laments as well as joyful praise, to recall His faithfulness for the future, to confess our sins and to profess our faith in the one who absolves us by His Word of pardon.
 - 1.) *[Acts 2:42]- And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*
3. Recycle by returning to the sources and adapting them to our time and place.
 - a. *[2 Timothy 2:15]- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

E. Personal Disciplines.

1. Early church had disciplines in place for teaching and evaluation before baptism and membership including Catechism.
2. Constantine's Roman Empire annexation of Christ caused a sharp falling away of these practices.
3. The Gospel began to be taken for granted.
4. The Reformation sought to recover these ancient practices.
5. This church discipline has fallen on hard times in the land that Dietrich Bonhoeffer aptly described as "Protestantism without the Reformation."
6. The ordinary disciplines of family devotions seem to be vanishing.
7. As church and family disciplines were subordinated to private disciplines, the burden of growing in the faith was placed almost exclusively on the individual.
8. It is all of these disciplines-public, family, and private-that we need to recover.

F. Emerging branches.

1. Concern of parents is that they are "interfering" with their child's personal relationship with Jesus.
2. Concern of outspoken neighbors over abuse of children by indoctrinating the children before they can choose a religion (or no religion) for themselves.
3. Problem is that the children have not been given enough of the Christian faith even to apostatize from it properly.
4. When it comes to brainwashing children, it is not churches that are the best examples but the world.
5. For young atheists, many had attended churches but said the mission and message of their churches were vague and they offered superficial answers to life's difficult questions.
6. Churches need to become more child-friendly without being child centered.
7. Children raised in churches often don't feel connected on a theological level. They don't know what they believe and why.
8. Grammar stage, where children simply absorb the language of Zion.
 - a. *[2 Timothy 1:13]- Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*
9. Logic stage; they see the relations between various doctrines and can even begin to make some of their own connections.
 - a. *[1 Peter 3:15]- But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*
 - b. *[Acts 2:41-42]- Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*
 - c. *[Colossians 3:16]- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
 - d. *[Psalm 73, 16-28]- But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

- X. Stop dreaming and love your neighbor.
- A. You go, girl!
1. We are ambivalent about the role of women-in the home, in the church, and in society.
 - a. That tension gets transferred to our children.
 - b. They are expected to be preparing for Proverbs 42 wifeness/motherhood.
 - c. Also they are encouraged to be everything a boy can be and to do everything a boy can do.
- B. People versus projects.
1. Do we enjoy our neighbors?
 - a. It is easier to serve our neighbor than enjoy him.
 - b. It is easier to see me and my service as a gift to someone else less fortunate, without seeing a needy person as a gift to me.
 - c. It is easier to enjoy the neighbor that you may not see again, or at least for more than five or ten minutes at a time.
- C. Two kinds of sacrifice provided by the Old Testament Law.
1. Thanksgiving-tribute to the Great King.
 - a. ***[Romans 1:21]- Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.***
 2. Guilt-to take away sins.
 - a. ***[Genesis 3:21]- Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.***
 3. We now live in a grace economy, not a debt economy.
 - a. *"We are passive receivers of the gift of salvation, but we are thereby rendered active worshipers in a life of thanksgiving that is exhibited chiefly in loving service to our neighbors."*
 - b. *"Christ is both the fully satisfying thank offering (a life well-pleasing to God on our behalf) and guilt offering (substitution for our sins)."*
 - 1.) ***[2 Corinthians 1:19-20]- For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.***
 - 2.) *"Until people are persuaded that God is the fountain of all of our good, they will never devote themselves wholly, truly, and sincerely to Him." John Calvin*
 - c. Two kingdoms
 - 1.) The church as the place where sinners are receivers.
 - 2.) The church as the people who are scattered to fulfill their common callings.
 - a.) The church has no dominion.
 - b.) It cannot command the covenant community to embrace particular political ideologies, policies, parties, or politicians.
 - c.) It can only witness to the kingdom of grace, not inaugurate the kingdom of glory.
 - d. ***[Isaiah 55:1-2]- Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for***

that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

- e. We're no longer modern masters, or post modern tourists, but forgiven pilgrims on our way to the city God has built.

D. Entering God's rest.

1. The Lord's Day is not another treadmill, but a day of resting from our works as we bask in His marvelous provision for our salvation and temporal needs.
 - a. *[Hebrews 4:1-5]- Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*
 - b. *[Psalm 24:1]- The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
 - c. *[Matthew 20:28]- Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
 - d. *[Psalm 46:10]- Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
2. The Lord's Day is not a cessation from all activity.
 - a. It's joining our Lord in His conquest over death and hell.
 - b. It's receiving and dispensing the spoils of His victory.
 - c. It's opening the windows to the beams radiating from the age to come, where Christ reigns.
 - d. It's anticipating together that day when He returns to reign in glory.
3. *[Hebrews 4:4]- For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*
4. *[Romans 10:3,21]- For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*
5. *[Hebrews 4:14,16]- Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

E. Unstoppable?

1. *[Psalm 90:12]- So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

XI. After ordinary: anticipating the revolution.

A. Jesus Christ's return is The Next Big Thing.

1. Christ already secured this glorious destiny for us as "firstfruits".

B. Not as good as it gets.

1. Working through the ordinary means of grace, He not only gives us good things, He is Himself the gift of the Father and the Son.
 - a. *[Ephesians 1:14]- Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*
2. The Spirit renovates and tends the garden-both within us and between us and the other branches.

3. Two kinds of prosperity gospels-personal health, wealth, and happiness; the other promises social transformation. In both versions, the results are up to us.
- C. The next big thing-No, the real one.
1. ***[Revelation 21:5]- And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.***
 2. The Next Big Thing is not another Pentecost or another apostle or another political or social cause. It is Christ's return.
- D. If you knew Jesus were returning tomorrow.
1. *"Even if I knew the world was going to end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today."*
Martin Luther
 2. ***[1 Thessalonians 4:11-12]- And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.***
 3. ***[Matthew 16:18]- And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***
 4. ***[Mark 3:27]- No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.***
 5. ***[Luke 10:17]- And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.***
 6. ***[John 16:33]- These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.***
- E. Last call: dying as a vocation.
1. Because of the gospel, believers are free to embrace their final cross, death, as a calling from God.
 - a. ***[1 Corinthians 15:26]- The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.***
 - b. ***[2 Corinthians 4:1-2]- Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.***
 - c. ***[2 Corinthians 4:7-10, 12]- But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.***
 - d. ***[2 Corinthians 4:16-18]- For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.***
 2. The wall separating Gentiles from Jews, symbolized by the temple's outer court of the Gentiles and the inner court, has been torn down in Christ.
 3. Heaven on earth at last has been secured already by Christ's victory over sin and death.
 4. Now we can see more clearly that the vices that have warped us are corruptions of original gifts.
 5. ***[Romans 8:18-25]- For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious***

liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.