

The
Mind
of
Christ

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SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

OCTOBER 2 – THE MIND OF CHRIST

In a world filled with people who want to do their own thing, whatever happened to obedience? There are things bigger than our desires, and we must learn to submit to the Lord who created us and gives us life.

OCTOBER 9 – CHRIST’S COMPASSIONATE MIND

The more we study the life of Jesus Christ, the more we see His compassion for those in need and those who are hurting. Jesus could empathize with those in pain. He is a Savior who comforts and helps those in pain.

OCTOBER 16 – CHRIST’S OBEDIENT MIND

Though Jesus was the Son of God, he learned obedience and became the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9). Faith in Christ always responds in obedient faith that shows gratitude for all of God’s blessings.

OCTOBER 23 – CHRIST’S TRUTHFUL MIND

In a world given to spinning the truth and fake ideologies, it is reassuring to know there is one place we can turn for the eternal truth, which cannot be changed or destroyed. That truth is found in the teaching of Jesus Christ.

OCTOBER 30 – CHRIST’S LOVING MIND

One cannot come to understand the Lord Jesus Christ without seeing His great love for all people. Jesus loves the weak, the ungodly, the sinner, and even His enemy. He sacrificed His life for all. He doesn’t just talk love; He demonstrates it!

The Mind of Christ

When you can look into someone's words and actions, you can also begin to know His mind.

Philip the apostle said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it's enough for us." And Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." John 1:18 says that Jesus "has explained Him" or "made Him known." Hebrews 1, verse 3 says of Jesus, that He "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. And after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Jesus' mind was set on what God says and will for His life. Jesus told the devil after being tempted to turn stones into bread, He said "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" The Lord Jesus wouldn't allow the devil to keep Him from following every written word from the mouth of God. And this is an example to follow. When the world wants to lead us astray, let's follow the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:29, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him (that is the Father)." Yes that's the way that we please the Lord.

Our reading today comes from Colossians, chapter 2, verses 1 to 3. And here Paul talks about the great treasure we have in the mind of Christ. He says, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Oh what a wonderful desire to have the wisdom that is greater than anything that's on this earth. The treasure of the wisdom of Christ.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that through Your word we can learn about Jesus Christ, and enjoy all of the treasure that comes through Him, Treasures of wisdom and treasures of knowledge. And help us to pursue that wisdom and knowledge from a full heart of love, and a willingness to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

From the time that Jesus was only twelve years old, we could see His mind exceptionally capable of knowledge and wisdom. Luke 2 and verse 40 says, "And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him." When Jesus at twelve was in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, Luke says in chapter 2 verse 47, "And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." Verse 52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." He grew as a whole person, intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually. And as God's Son, He's the greatest example of what God desires of us.

One amazing thing about the mind of God and the mind of Jesus Christ is the purity of His mind. Just as God is holy, so the Lord Jesus is holy. Many people don't understand the holiness of Jesus Christ. And sadly, The American Bible Society recently published the state of the Bible in 2022 and found 58 percent of people who aren't engaged with Scripture say "Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people." You know it's astonishing that 18 percent of people who are regularly reading Scripture say the same thing. It's clear that they really don't know or do not believe the teaching of the New Testament.

Hebrews 4:14 to 15 says about Jesus, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are,

yet without sin.” Hebrews 7 and verse 26 says, “For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” The Lord Jesus could say in John 8:46, “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” Could you say that? Peter called Jesus, “the Holy One of God” (John 6 and verse 69).

Now, the New Testament clearly states Jesus never sinned, but it does say that He was tempted. Now one can read about that in Matthew 4 and Luke chapter 4. Being tempted isn't the same thing as sin; and falling into temptation, that's when it becomes sin when we fall to it. James 1:13 to 15 says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I'm being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” When we're tempted to sin, we can resist it or we can give into it. And when we give into our desires rather than discipline ourselves, we commit sin; and sin leads to spiritual death. There's no doubt Jesus was tempted greatly, but He did not fall to the temptation to sin.

The Lord's mind was filled with wisdom and righteousness. Isaiah 11:2 to 4 prophesied, “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.”

Now one can easily see the wisdom of the Lord Jesus and His honesty about life and about people. He was kind to everyone, but He was not naïve. He didn't look the other way when people sinned. He recognized murder was wrong, but He also condemned anger. He condemned adultery, but Jesus also condemned lust in the heart as adultery. The Lord Jesus didn't just look at your life; He looked into your heart. He said in Matthew 15:19 to 20, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

You see, Jesus was honest, He called a hypocrite a hypocrite. He pronounced seven woes on the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. I heard one preacher say that Jesus never called anyone a sinner, and we shouldn't ever say such a thing. Well such people are not preaching the whole gospel; Jesus died for our sins. If no one is a sinner—and Jesus died for sinners (1 Corinthians 15:3), then for whom did Jesus die? Now the good news of Jesus Christ is salvation from sin, freedom from sin, and the opportunity to change our hearts and our lives. One will never see the astonishing beauty of grace and forgiveness, until one sees the hopeless ugliness of sin.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned against unfair judging in Matthew 7:1 to 4, He said “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment that you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye, but don't notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there's a log in your own eye? (And then He says) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

When people suggest that we should never judge anyone over anything, they really miss what Jesus was saying. Jesus taught this at a time when Pharisees and the people were judging one another over man-made traditions. They were making up morals and laws presumptuously, not from God but from men. They were trying to take the place of God and condemning others over their man-made laws. And they didn't realize the peril they were putting themselves in. They were looking at the little things of others while failing to repent of the large sins of their own.

There certainly is a time to distinguish righteousness from unrighteousness. The Lord Jesus also said in Matthew 7 and verse 5, "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before (the swine) the pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you." You see some even today are like dogs, and some are like pigs. And we should be careful not to prejudge, but we should also not ignore the evidence before us. Some think we should never judge anything, but the Lord Jesus told some critical Jews, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

We must call sin what it is. We must not deceive ourselves about sin. Galatians 5:19 to 21 speaks of the works of the flesh. The inspired apostle Paul said, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Now Christ is serious about sin.

One day the Lord Jesus will come again as our judge. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Hebrews 9:27 reminds us, "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." Though Jesus is full of grace for us in this life, there comes an end to His patience, and the patience of God when this life is over.

2 Peter 3 and verse 9 says, that "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." The Lord Jesus doesn't want to condemn anybody; but when people refuse to repent and obey the Lord, the Lord with a broken heart fulfills what He warned to those who wouldn't believe or obey the gospel. Those who will not repent will perish. The Lord Jesus takes His words seriously. And when He speaks we should listen to Him; we should never suppose that He'll take back His words. Jesus doesn't joke about His message to us.

The scribes and the Pharisees criticized the Lord Jesus, because He was a friend to sinners; but He called those sinners to repent, because He knew how sin ruined their lives. He called people to repent, because He knew grace and repentance would bring them healing. You see, a friend calls you to repentance! A cruel person ignores or dismisses your sins; and that dismissal is far more cruel than calling someone a sinner, because your sins will destroy you in this life and take away your hope for the life to come. Kind honesty is the mark of true friendship. An enemy will not warn you of trouble ahead. The Lord Jesus didn't gloss over or praise the unrighteousness of the prodigal son but He honored the Father's graceful ways and celebrated the prodigal son's humble, penitent confession, and returned home.

When Jesus spoke, He spoke the words of His Father in heaven. Because they came from the Father through Jesus they're entirely true and trustworthy. The Lord Jesus said in John 7:16 to 18, that "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. And if anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority. (And He says) The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood."

You see, the Lord knew the Father's way, He knew the Father's will, and He knew the Father's words were the means by which we could receive eternal life. He said in John 12:49 to 50, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." Jesus took seriously His task of teaching us exactly what the Father told Him to say.

The Lord Jesus said in John 14 and verse 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father but through Me." The world may tell you there are many ways to heaven, but Jesus wouldn't tell you that. He is the way, the only way, to the Father. When Jesus said "no one comes to the Father but through Me," He spoke clearly and firmly. And if He's our Judge on the last day, we should not expect that He's forgotten what He has said and what has been written. We must take Him seriously. We must listen to His words. The wise listen and do what He says; the foolish hear Him, but they don't do what He says (Matthew 7:24 to 27). And if we miss the way, we miss the truth, we'll also forfeit the life that Jesus came to give.

Now the apostle John described in part why he wrote the gospel of John. He wrote in John 20:30 to 31, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (that is the Messiah), the (Christ the) Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." I tell you, Jesus wants you to believe and to be saved. Yes, to be saved.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful for the words that are found in the New Testament. The words of Jesus that You reveal to Him, that He spoke and were written down by the apostles and the early writers. Father we're thankful we know those words of eternal life. Help us Heavenly Father always to be obedient to Your will, to not vary from those things, and not to be fooled by the thinking of the world. Help us Heavenly Father to love You, to love one another. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Lord Jesus came to this world "to seek and save that which was the lost" (Luke 19 and verse 10). Everyone who has unresolved sin is lost. Now He sacrificed His body and shed His blood in order to redeem us from our sins. And till we realize the magnitude of our sin and see our need for a Savior, we'll never understand Jesus. We'll never appreciate His amazing sacrifice for us. Isaiah through a prophet's eyes saw the enormity of His gift. He said in Isaiah 53:5, "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

Jesus took every wound given to Him by the godless men, so that He might heal you spiritually. The Lord Jesus wanted something better for you than a life filled with sin, guilt, and condemnation. He wanted to bring us out of darkness into light. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says, that God "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." The Lord offers us abundant life and eternal life, if we humbly and willingly give ourselves to Him.

Please don't wait to make a commitment to the Lord. You don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. Place your faith in Jesus Christ and trust in what He says in Scripture. Turn from your sins to the Lord Jesus Christ and follow Him. Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And God will forgive you and wash away your sins (Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16). God will cause you to be born again in baptism, so that you might enter into the kingdom of God.

Christ's Compassionate Mind

One of the most heart-warming things about Jesus Christ is His compassion and care for every person. Today we're going to explore the compassion of Christ.

The word "compassion" means the suffering of another person deeply touches one's own heart with deep empathy. This empathy arises from love and affection. And Jesus loved us so, in such a way that He was willing to sacrifice Himself for our sins. Romans 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus couldn't leave us in the desperate, lost condition, where He found us. He acted with compassion to deliver and redeem us from spiritual death, which means we'd be eternally separated from God.

The Lord Jesus said in John 15:12 to 13, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Jesus loved us with this greatest kind of love of all time. He loved us so much that he laid down his life to cruel men in order to save us. You might think, "Well I don't need saving." Are you sure? Did Christ die for nothing?

Our reading today comes from Matthew 9: 36 to 38, and here the apostle, the inspired apostle Matthew, helps us to look into the heart of Jesus Christ, to see his compassion. "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited (that is down cast) like sheep without a shepherd. And then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'" Jesus cared about the souls of every person, and He knew that they needed His help and He was willing to give it. He had compassion.

Let us pray. "Father, help us to have the compassion that Jesus had. To love every person and to help them to come to know You and to love You the way that Jesus did. Father, help us to give ourselves fully and freely to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Lord Jesus was both divine and human. He understood what it was like to have passed through the heavens, but He also understood our weaknesses as humans. He knew the human spirit was willing to do God's will, but the Lord also realized that human flesh was weak to sin. Sometimes people who have committed sin feel so guilty and ashamed that they fear approaching Jesus. And they don't realize the compassion of the Lord Jesus towards those who humbly and penitently approach Him. He understands temptation and is willing to help us in our struggles against sin.

Hebrews 4:14 to 16 says, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence, boldness, draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Our Lord Jesus is full of mercy and grace.

He's willing to help us overcome our temptations and sin, when we come boldly to Him.

Since Jesus lived as a human on this earth, He understands the physical needs of people. He knows the needs to drink water, to eat food, to keep warm, and to rest. And on more than one occasion, Jesus took note of the people's physical needs. Matthew 15:32 to 38 says: Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they've been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I'm unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." And the disciples said to him, "Well, where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?" And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few

small fish.' And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces of left over. Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children."

The Lord Jesus taught us the need for compassion on those who are hurting maybe from an accident or from a crime. You see, we all face unexpected problems, and we're thankful that someone out there cares for us enough to help. Well, during His ministry Jesus showed compassion on those who were ill, those who were maimed, those who were blind and deaf, and those who were demon possessed. The inspired apostle Matthew, was an eye-witness of the Lord Jesus, and he said in Matthew 4:23 to 24, "And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them."

The Lord Jesus was not only compassionate Himself; He wanted the people who follow Him to show compassion also. And so He taught in a parable in Luke 10, 30 to 37, that "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."

"But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. And then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I'll repay you when I come back.' Which of these three (Jesus asks), do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers? And He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' And Jesus said to him, 'You go, and do likewise.'"

The Lord also knew the heartache that people suffer when they lose a loved one. You know, we sing Frank Graeff's song, "Does Jesus Care?" And I love the words of the chorus, "O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary and long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares." Luke 7: 11 to 17 says "Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. And as he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' And then he came up and touched the bier (that is the casket) , and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has arisen among us!' and 'God has visited his people!' And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country." Yes, the Lord Jesus does indeed visit His people and He knows all that happens to them, both the good and the bad.

When Jesus' friend Lazarus passed away, you remember that Jesus showed compassion to Martha and Mary. John 11:33 to 36 says: that "when Jesus saw her (that is Mary) weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' And they said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'" I tell you when you grieve, the Lord knows it and He cares. Peter encourages

us in 1 Peter 5 and verse 7 to cast “all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” Psalm 33:18 says, “Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love.”

Again, David said in Psalm 34:4 to 7, “I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. (David said about) this poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.” The apostle Paul could agree and say in Philippians 4 verses 5 to 7, “Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus also showed great compassion on those in His culture who were thought of as sinners and even the tax-collectors. The religious elite of that time were cruel to such people. They looked down on them with contempt. Luke 15:1 to 7 says: “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him (that is Jesus). And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So he told them this parable: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he’s lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he’s found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ (Then Jesus said) ‘Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.’”

We shouldn't let our imperfections and sins make us think the Lord Jesus would reject us. When we're humble and penitent, the Lord Jesus opens His heart to us. Jesus said about finding the lost sheep in Luke 15 and verse 7, “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Now when the woman rejoiced over finding her lost coin, the Lord Jesus said in Luke 15:10, “In the same way, I tell you, there's joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Luke 15:20 to 24 reveals God's compassion over the return of the prodigal son, “And he arose and came to his father (don't you know that this boy was afraid). But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and (the father) ran and embraced him and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I've sinned against heaven and before you. And I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, put a ring on his hand, shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and now he's alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.’ Now when the older son became angry and grumbled at the father's celebration, the father replied, “‘Son, you've always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, he was lost and has been found.’” I tell you, it is right to rejoice, it is right to celebrate the repentance of anyone who has left sin and come home to the Lord.

We also see the heart of Jesus in Matthew 23, there Jesus repeatedly described the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, condemning their ways. And He frankly said of them in verse 33, he said “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?” Now you'd think Jesus would never have any desire for such people, but the Lord wanted to save even these hypocrites. The Lord Jesus could express his sorrow and compassion in Matthew 23:37 to 38: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (And so He says) See, your house is left to you desolate.” Yes, Jesus grieved over these souls.

Now it was not that Jesus was unwilling to take them under His wing; it was they who were unwilling to believe and obey Him. My friend, if the Lord rejects you on the day of judgment, that rejection first started with your rejection of Him. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He washed the feet of Judas Iscariot and called him "friend." Jesus loves even those who do not love Him. He demonstrated His love for the ungodly, the sinners, and His enemies by going to the cross (Romans 5:6 to 10). And no matter who you are or what you've done, the Lord still loves you and wants you to be saved and to love Him.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You have such great compassion on us even though we are so weak and flawed. And Father we're thankful that through the blood of Your son Jesus, there is a way, and a path to freedom from sin and to eternal life, and to forgiveness. Help us Heavenly Father to follow in the paths of Your son Jesus. It's in His name we pray, Amen."

Jesus has always loved the soul of every person. Hebrews 2 and verse 9 says, "But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." Now He's always cared for the lost. You might say in your heart, "Well I've sinned so much that I'm not sure I could be saved." My friend, the people Jesus died for were all sinners, including you and me. And His blood can cleanse all sin.

Matthew 9:36 to 38 reminds us, that "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" I tell you we are all helpless to save ourselves by ourselves. We need the Lord to rescue, deliver, and redeem us from our sinful past and to lead us to a better way of life than the destructive path of sin.

Now you can start that new life by placing your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, "without faith it's impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who seek Him." Turn from your sins in repentance and follow Jesus Christ. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God; and make Him your Lord; and be baptized. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). And when you're baptized God forgives you, He adds you to His church, and makes you His child.

Christ's Obedient Mind

In a world filled with people who want to do their own thing, whatever happened to obedience? Is obedience important? Today we're exploring the place of obedience in the mind of Christ.

The word obey is used quite frequently in Scripture. It means to hear, to heed, and to respond in conformity with what you have heard. An obedient soul pays attention to what God says and observes it. He is willing to submit his will to the will of the one that he serves. Jesus chose to be a servant, to follow the Father's rules and commands. He yielded control to another. And He was willing to set aside His own will and His own desires in order to please His Father in heaven. He didn't fuss with His Father; He didn't try to correct His Father; and He didn't reject whatever the Father told Him to do. That's obedience, and our Lord Jesus was obedient.

Our culture tells us to follow our hearts, and whatever we do is alright. Well, this pleases many but fails to take into account what the Lord says. There is an eternal authority above and over us, and we must one day give an account of ourselves to Him. Now obedience is often demanding and hard, but we must learn to obey Him in everything. Obedience comes from trust and from love. And when we love and seek to please, obedience becomes a true joy.

Our reading today comes from Philippians 2:5 to 11, and it talks about the attitude and the heart of Jesus Christ, and the kind of heart God wants us to have as well. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father." Because Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient, God exalted Him. Let's be obedient as well.

Let's pray. "Father we're thankful for Your love, and we're thankful for the gift of Jesus, for the forgiveness of our sins. Father help us to be like our Lord Jesus, to humble ourselves, and to be obedient. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

If we wish to be obedient, the first thing we must do is learn to listen. The first lesson of first grade is to listen to and follow instructions. We can never outgrow that lesson. Listening is a challenge throughout life, and we mustn't let growing into adulthood keep us from following the Lord's instructions. The most important thing we can do is listen to the Lord Jesus. We can never be obedient to the Lord if we don't know what He said. We can't assume that we know the truth. We can't assume that whatever someone tells us is the truth, because this world is full of lies and half-truths. Now, we have to search the Scriptures for ourselves to be sure. Jesus promised those who believed in Him in John 8:31 and 32, that "If you abide in my word, you are truly disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Now, the first step to obedience is listening to what God has said, but the second step to obedience is humbling ourselves. Now even though Jesus passed through the heavens, created the universe, and was the Savior of us all, He was never arrogant or full of Himself. Arrogant people are useless to God, because they aren't humble and willing to obey the Father. While the world will tell you to exalt yourself, the Lord humbled Himself and urges us to do the same.

The Lord Jesus said to His apostles in Matthew 20:25 to 28, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But

whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The Lord Jesus was a servant in heart and mind, and He expects those who follow Him to be servants as well.

The Lord Jesus calls to us not with arrogance but with humility. He said in Matthew 11:28 to 30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Jesus was gentle not harsh, lowly not arrogant. He doesn't put on our shoulders a burden that we cannot bear. He knows what it is to bear a yoke and to carry a burden, and He wants to make it possible for you to have it easy and light. Even as Lord, He is a servant to those who serve Him and serve with Him.

For you to find the life that He came to give, the Lord Jesus says in Luke 9:23 to 25, that "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" The Lord cannot use you if you're unwilling to humble and deny yourself. You must give up your life for His sake, if you wish to save your life! The new life that Jesus gives is far greater than a selfish life of sin; it's an abundant life and an eternal life.

Giving up your life may seem difficult. It certainly was not easy for Jesus to sacrifice His life for your sake, but it was necessary. Hebrews 5:7 to 9 says, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. And although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." Because Jesus learned obedience, because He suffered death, He was made perfect and was able to save those who obey Him. Now His obedience made it possible for you to obey Him.

Romans 5 and verse 19 contrasts Adam's sin in the Garden with Jesus's sacrifice at Golgotha, "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." Because Jesus was sinless and obedient, He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Hebrews 2 verses 9 and 10 says, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."

Obedience to God is not some small thing. Proverbs 19:16 says in the New American Standard Bible, that "He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of conduct will die." Now obedience begins with listening to what the Lord says. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 11 and verse 28, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it." Now it's not enough merely to believe what the Lord says, we must obey the Lord. John 3:36 says, that "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." The Lord Jesus Himself said in John 8:51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." Now if you wish to live with the Lord, keep His word.

Jesus emphasized obedience in John chapters 14 and 15. The Lord said in John 14:15, that "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Now that's a simple statement. Loving the Lord is demonstrated by keeping His commandments. Keeping the commandments in the mind of the Lord Jesus is not legalism, as some suppose. In His mind, keeping the commandments is relational. It's how we love Him. And He repeats this in verse 21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who

loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Now He repeats this simple message but adds what causes the Father to love us and what leads Jesus to love us. That is the result of keeping His commandments. Now these are the sincere words of Jesus, not mine. One might wonder how Jesus discloses Himself to us. Well verse 22 says that Judas (that's not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”

And Jesus answered and said to him in verses 23 and 24, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. Now he who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.” Now when a person loves the Lord deeply enough to keep His commandments the Father loves that person and Jesus loves that person to the point that they make their abode or “home” with that person. Now if you want God to make His home with you, love Him enough to keep His words. People who don't keep His words fail to love the Lord and the Father the way they ask to be loved. The Lord will not make His home with them.

Now the Lord Jesus said in John 15:8 to 10, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. And if you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.” Now if we wish to abide in the love of God, we do this by loving the Lord enough to keep His commandments.

Has it ever occurred to you that by living outside the will of God that you're also living outside the love of God? Has it occurred to you that you can leave the Father's love and no longer abide in it? Jude 21 tells us to “keep yourselves in the love of God.” Now you're probably recalling Romans 8:37 to 39 which says nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” But look at the context; Paul is speaking about the harsh things of life. It's true that these things cannot separate us from the love of God; but if we stop hearing, if we stop believing, if we stop loving, and stop obeying the Lord, we cannot keep ourselves in the love of God.

First John describes some people who thought they had a loving relationship with the Lord but failed to hear and obey the Lord. First John is written to Christians, not the world outside of Christ. 1 John 2:3 to 6 says, “And by this we know that we have come to know him (that is have a relationship with Him), if we keep his commandments. And whoever says ‘I know him’ but doesn't keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” Now those who teach once saved always saved and live in sin lie to themselves. They can lose their relationship with the Lord and be lost. You cannot live in sin and say that you're walking with the Lord. Paul described those who are defiled in Titus 1:16, “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.”

Now all the commandments of the Lord Jesus find their foundation in the Lord Jesus Himself. They are defined by His character and His practices. Jesus was obedient to the Father out of humility. And Philippians 2:5 to 8 urges us, to “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, didn't regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Now arrogance and conceit will not allow us to be obedient to the Father or to the Lord Jesus. Obedience is humble, it's humble listening to the One that we obey rather than insisting on our own way. Obedience means doing things the way the Lord wants them done. On the night before He was facing the cross, Jesus said, "so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me." (John 14:31) Now obedient people do not fuss with the Lord, they don't question the Lord, or edit what the Lord says. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:29, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." Now Jesus was blessed as a Son of the Father, because of His willingness to be obedient to the Father and to please Him, and so the Father gave Him a name above every name. And our knees will bow to Him one day and confess Jesus as Lord.

Would you pray with me. "Father, help us to be obedient to Your will, to love You always, to be more and more like Jesus our Lord. So that we may humble ourselves and be obedient to the things that are easy and to the things that are difficult. And to love You from a full heart. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

The Lord Jesus said, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when the flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who's heard and not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

We're all choosing either to listen to the Lord or to listen to sinful things. Romans 6:16 to 18 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you're slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Now which are you? A slave of sin or a slave of righteousness. To obey from the heart, one must hear God's word, believe the Lord Jesus and His teaching, repent of sin, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion in water, and it's done so that are sins will be forgiven (Acts 2:38 and Acts 22 verse 16). Now when you're baptized, you'll rise to walk in newness of life. Why not obey the Lord today? You won't regret doing the right thing.

Christ's Truthful Mind

In a world filled with lies and errors, it's comforting to know the source of truth that never deceives. Today we're exploring the Lord's mind that's filled with truth.

The concept of truth is more than just being honest, it's being authentic, and being reliable, being faithful. Being truthful is a moral concept, found in the character of God and in Christ. This moral characteristic speaks of the Lord's faithfulness and reliability. Christ is the essence of truth, and Christ expects His followers to demonstrate this in their character. Scripture condemns falsehood but praises and demands the truth. Numbers 23:19 says, that "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" The God of the Bible is not fickle. He doesn't lie about the consequences of sin.

David prayed in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name." We too should pray that we might walk in the truth of the Lord. To find that truth we must study the New Testament and listen to its words. Jesus said in a prayer to the Father, "Your word is truth." (John 17:17).

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John, and chapter 18, verses 33 to 37. And this discusses a conversation between Pontius Pilate and the Lord Jesus before He is to be crucified. "Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?' Pilate answered, 'I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.' Therefore Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" And it's still that way today.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful that Jesus came to bear witness to the truth, help us to listen to Him and to serve Him. In Jesus name, Amen."

Romans 1:21 to 25 reveals the futile condition of the pagan world in the first century. It says, "For although they knew God, they didn't honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish heart was darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."

The world has always lost sight of God and deceived itself about many things. God created us and gave us this world, but the selfishness within humanity has often lost sight of God and replaced God with its own ideas. Now these ideas permitted them to follow their own desires, even desires that brought them ruin, pain, conflict, and destruction. A world filled with lies and wickedness needed someone to show them the path out of darkness into light. Paul opened his epistle to the Galatians with these words: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Galatians 1:3 to 5). Jesus is indeed our redeemer, our deliverer, our Savior, and our hope. He heals us by teaching us the truth and showing us the way out of a life that's filled with lies and deception.

Paul saw this change take place in the Gentiles of Ephesus, who left idolatry and immorality to come to Christ. The inspired apostle Paul described the condition of the Gentiles in Ephesians 4:17 to 19, “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that’s in them, due to their hardness of heart. They’ve become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.” Now without a knowledge of the truth, it’s impossible to live a godly, righteous life. People living in darkness, having no hope and without God, will live miserable, sinful lives.

Paul then reminds them of what Christ had done for them in verses 20 to 24, he says “But that’s not the way that you learned Christ! — assuming that you’ve heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” When you know the Lord Jesus and decide to follow Him, life changes from darkness to light, from hopelessness to hope-filled ways with a future. Lies can’t save your soul and can’t give you the promise of eternal life.

Now there’s hope in the truth of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus gives us newness of life, abundant life, and eternal life in heaven. Revelation 22:14 to 15 says, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” What we believe and how we live matters because the truth matters. And those who embrace and practice falsehood will not enter the heavenly city.

The Father in heaven out of love sent His Son to this earth to reveal to us the truth. Because of Jesus we can know the Father, we can know the truth, and we can know love, we can know how to serve others, and we can know what is right and wrong. The Lord Jesus spoke the truth and lived the truth before us. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Yes, Jesus was full of both grace and truth.

Many like the grace of Christ, but they don’t want the truth that comes with it. They don’t want to talk about sin or admit sin matters. And when they do this, they deceive themselves. They need, and we need the grace of God because we’ve sinned. Grace is the answer to sin; but a grace without the truth of how we must leave sin, repent, and then live righteous lives is merely sentimentalism. Grace does not save apart from repentance, apart from a transformed life. We don’t want God’s grace to be cheap or to be in vain.

Nor do we want to live with truth but lack the grace of God. Now God’s grace makes us people who show grace to others. Truth without grace and love is hollow and ineffective. 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that love is not arrogant or rude. And love “does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.” We must speak the truth, but if we lack love, we’re just “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” We can have all knowledge and all faith and still be “nothing.”

Philosophers through the ages have asked whether truth is even knowable. The Bible everywhere assumes people can know the truth, if they will listen to God. The Lord Jesus promised in John 8:31 and 32, that “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” By studying the words of Jesus we can know the truth and become His true disciples. Many students, sadly, study more from the writings of men than they do from the Scriptures. They listen more to the thinking of men than they do to Jesus and they miss fully knowing the truth of God’s worth. They fall into error because they listen to the wrong sources. And that’s why we must continue to study God’s word.

Sadly, some people want to substitute their subjective feelings for objective facts. Now this substitution creates controversy, and some would rather ignore these objective facts to keep from facing controversy. For instance, only Jesus is the Son of God who became flesh, and who died for our sins, and who rose again on the third day. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (That's the words of Jesus). And only Jesus can save you from sin or give you eternal life.

Feelings can't turn a lie into the truth, and feelings will not change what God has said in His word. Just because I feel some sin to be okay doesn't make it okay. Just because I feel justified to take revenge doesn't mean that I have the right to take revenge. Romans 12:17 to 19 says, "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

Many people imagine that feeling love for someone will turn what is immoral into something that is moral, that what is wrong will become right, and what is unacceptable to God will somehow become something that God accepts; but they're lying to themselves. 1 Corinthians 6:9 to 10 says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." Paul makes it clear in Galatians 6:7 to 8, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." You can call immoral behavior loving, but God still calls it sinful. Love is not some magical pill that turns sin into righteousness.

Many people fail to distinguish subjective truth from objective truth. Well what do I mean? Subjective truth usually describes how we feel or what we like or dislike. And you know what, this can change with the times in our lives. But objective truth, unlike subjective truth, is narrow and defined. The words of Jesus are objective, not subjective. You can't twist and redefine them. They stand outside and above culture. Objective truth doesn't change at the whims of time or culture. You can't vote subjective truth in to replace objective truth, and you can't vote objective truth out. You can ignore it, but you can't change it, and you can't make it go away. You can't substitute what you like for the truth found in God's word. And if you don't like it, you must still face it. Even if the world disagrees with the Lord's objective truth, that truth remains true and authoritative. Romans 3 and verse 4 says, "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar." To find the truth, go to God and to His word.

The Lord Jesus said in John 18:37 "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.' Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' And Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I've come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.'" The Lord Jesus came to bear witness to the truth, so that we might have a standard of good and evil. Because Jesus spoke, we can distinguish truth from lies and God's will from human errors.

Jesus promised the apostles in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." Later in John 16:13 the Lord Jesus promised, "But when He (and He did it to the Apostles),(but when He) the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you (Apostles) into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and will disclose to you what is to come." The

Holy Spirit did come to the apostles at Pentecost and revealed all the truth. And we aren't lacking what God wants us to know, it's all in the word of God.

Well, why are we speaking about this? Well, Jesus made a promise to guide the apostles of the first century into all the truth. And if all spiritual truth is indeed been delivered to them in the first century according to the promise, then we should look to the inspired, written word, the New Testament as our standard of truth for the Christian faith and life. The New Testament came about in fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send out "scribes" in Matthew 23:34. The work of scribes was primarily that of copying the words of Jesus. And I'm thankful we have these words recorded so that we might know the mind and heart of Christ. We are indeed most richly blessed to know the Lord through the things revealed in the written word of God, the New Testament. Read and study the written words of Jesus, if you want to know the truth!

Let's pray. "Father, we're grateful that the wonderful mind of Christ and the mind that You gave to Him, and the words that You gave to Him were revealed to us in Your word in the New Testament. Father, help us to hold fast to the things which Jesus taught. And to be the kind of people that honor You with our obedience and our love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

We must consider what we think about each day. If we buy into half-truths and popular lies, while we ignore the whole truth found in Scripture, we'll never know about Jesus Christ or about salvation. If we give ourselves to man-made ideas, we'll return to spiritual darkness, we'll miss the cross and the resurrection of Christ Jesus, and we'll lack the knowledge and wisdom that leads to eternal life.

Much of popular Christianity is far removed from the mind of Christ. Some say faith alone will save, but a faith that doesn't obey won't save anyone. John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." You see, just because something is true doesn't mean it is the whole truth. Faith is necessary to salvation, absolutely, but so is love, repentance, and obedience. If we wish to follow Jesus, we need to embrace the whole truth not select only what we like or agree with.

Some will tell you to say this prayer with me and you'll be saved, they'll tell you that, but the apostle Peter in answer to the problem of sin at Pentecost said, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2 and verse 38). Now he said that at the beginning of Christianity, and the Scriptures consistently show faith, repentance, and baptism into Christ are necessary to be forgiven. Baptism into Christ is a full immersion in water, just as Christ was baptized fully in the Jordan River. Now, Jesus never departed from the words of His Father (John 12:49 to 50), and we should never depart from the words of Jesus Christ either.

Christ's Loving Mind

If you really want to know what love is all about, look at Jesus Christ. Today we're hoping to see a little of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

I've been blessed to have loving parents, a loving wife, loving children, loving grandchildren, loving brothers and sisters, and many, many dear friends; but no one has ever loved me like Jesus Christ. Only Jesus ever died for me; only Jesus endured the cross and died for my sins; and only Jesus could forgive me. Jesus has put up with my weaknesses, prayed for me, and never gave up on me. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says that "Jesus Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." One can hardly imagine all the suffering that Jesus endured on the cross, so that you and I might come to God and live with Him forever. Such love has no equal.

The Lord Jesus personified love. And you could see it in everything that He did during His earthly ministry. Parables of the prodigal son and the Good Samaritan reveal how God loves us and how we should love each other. Jesus tasted death for every person (Hebrews 2 and verse 9), because He loved us. The gospel is for all people in every nation. And we can all be one in Christ Jesus, because of His love and grace.

Our reading today comes from Ephesians chapter 3 verses 14 to 19, and there Paul is praying for the people in the church of Ephesus. "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." And oh how badly we need to know the love of Christ.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that in Your word you give us a glimpse of the great love of Jesus Christ, His heart, His compassion, and His willingness to forgive our sins. Help us Heavenly Father to love Him, and to be obedient to Your word. In Jesus name, Amen."

According to John 1:1 to 4, the Lord Jesus was the Word and He was of course God, and He existed with the Father from the beginning. Now He created us and now sustains us (Colossians 1:15 to 17). And He prayed in John 17:5, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Now until Jesus came to the earth, He lived in all the glory and beauty of heaven with the Father. Have you considered what Jesus gave up by coming to earth? 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." Jesus gave it all up, so that you might share the glory and riches of heaven with Him. Jesus left eternal glory and comfort to suffer on earth.

Ephesians 2:4 to 7 reminds us, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he has loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." Jesus wanted us to share with Him the glory of the heavenly places. He gave up heaven for a time, so you could enjoy it forever.

Now to save us from sin and redeem us was not a cheap thing. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom

we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” We certainly live in a dark and confused world, just as it was in the first century, but the Lord's love saw our hearts and wanted to redeem us. He knew we couldn't save ourselves by ourselves, that He had to redeem us. He knew that we couldn't be good enough to earn heaven; that we had to be redeemed by His blood that was sacrificed.

And when Jesus came to this earth, “He came to His own, (but the Bible says) that those who were His own didn't receive Him” (John 1 verse 11). Of course, God knew this would happen. In the seventh century before Christ, Isaiah the prophet said in Isaiah 53:3 to 6, that “Jesus was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we've turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Though Jesus came with love to redeem us and to bear our iniquity, the people of this time and many people today have never accepted Him. He bore the sins of people who despised and rejected Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head, spit on Him, slapped Him repeatedly, bloodied and weakened Him with a cruel whip, mocked Him, and condemned Him unjustly. They put nails through His hands and feet and hung Him upon a cross. The worst in men did this to the holy and innocent Son of God. He willingly endured the suffering and the cross because He loved us.

The Lord Jesus was as good as His word. He never commanded us to do anything He was unwilling to do. The Lord Jesus said in John 15:12 to 13, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

Peter explained the heart of Jesus and His determination to do what was right and what was needed despite the cost. 1 Peter 2:21 to 24 says, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” For Jesus, it was all very personal. He didn't send others to die for us; He paid that price Himself. He didn't take vengeance on those who caused His suffering, but entrusted Himself to God.

Jesus defines what love is all about. He didn't just talk love; He lived it and died to demonstrate it. 1 John 4 verses 8 to 11 says that “Anyone who doesn't love doesn't know God, because God is love. And in this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” That big word “propitiation” refers to His loving sacrifice in order to atone for our sins. He was our sin-offering that we might have peace with God.

Now without His gracious death, we can't have the forgiveness of sins. Because He lovingly sacrificed Himself for us, He appeased God's wrath on sinful people. His blood washes us clean and frees us from the penalty of sin. And if you aren't cleansed by His sacrifice, then you're going to have to pay the penalty for your sins yourself. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Without the blood of Jesus, the wrath of God abides on you. The Lord Jesus is the only way to the Father, and only His blood can wash away our sins.

And Jesus was willing to pay that extreme price of suffering and crucifixion for our sake. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." He was a righteous offering, so we could become righteous. He wanted to transform our lives, so that we could imitate Him and become the people that God intended for us to be. He wanted us to live with love in our hearts and lives. 1 Corinthians 16:14 says, "Let all that you do be done in love."

Jesus wanted His people to love everyone, people they didn't know, and even their enemies. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:43 to 48, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." I must confess, that this is a very high bar. It goes against being self-centered, but it gives us the path to peace.

Loving, even when we aren't loved back, was in the heart and the life of Jesus. Jesus again lived up to His own teaching. He cared about the hateful and indifferent people who sent Him to the cross. Luke 22:33 to 34 says: "And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they're doing.' And they cast lots to divide his garments." Jesus prayed for the very people who stripped Him, nailed Him to a cross, and gambled for His clothes.

Ephesians 5:1 and 2 urges us, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Churches not only meet to worship but they also meet to encourage one another, to encourage each other to love and to do good works. Hebrews 10:24 and 25 says, "and now let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Now if you're one of those folks who have abandoned assembling with the church, you're robbing yourself of a relationship with God's family; and you're cheating yourself out of much good.

You might ask, "Well, what is Jesus doing for us now?" Well first, Jesus is interceding for you. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Second, the Lord Jesus is your mediator with God. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 6 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time."

Third, Jesus is your advocate with the Father. 1 John 2:1 to 2 says, "My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation (that atoning sacrifice) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." The very one who died for you, to atone for your sins, is the One pleading your case before the Father in heaven to forgive you.

There's no doubt that you will suffer heartaches and struggles. Please don't imagine that these things mean that God doesn't love you. If you're a faithful Christian, there will never be a time when God and the Lord Jesus have turned against you. No matter what happens, God loves you.

Romans 8:35-39 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Have confidence in God's love. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul said in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Yes, one day He's coming for us.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful for the promise of Your constant love, that You intercede for us. Father, we're thankful for Jesus, and for all that He's doing to bless our lives and to give us a home in heaven. And Father we pray that we will always love You and serve You. In Jesus name, Amen."

If you ask, "Phil, why are you a Christian?" I could give you many intellectual reasons to believe in Jesus Christ. I've spent a lifetime studying a defense of my faith, and the arguments are very convincing. My reason for serving Jesus Christ, however, comes from John 12 verse 32, where the Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." My love came from His demonstrated love for me on the cross and His blessings given to me day by day. 1 John 4:19 says that, "We love, because He first loved us." I serve Jesus, because I love Him.

To be united with Christ, we must respond to God in faith, love, repentance, and obedience. We obey Christ when we're baptized. In baptism, God acts on us. Romans 6:3 to 7 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Now God acts upon us in baptism through the death of Christ, burying us and raising us with Christ, so that we may be freed from sin. Now if you believe and love the Lord Jesus Christ, let God act and free you from sin when you're baptized.