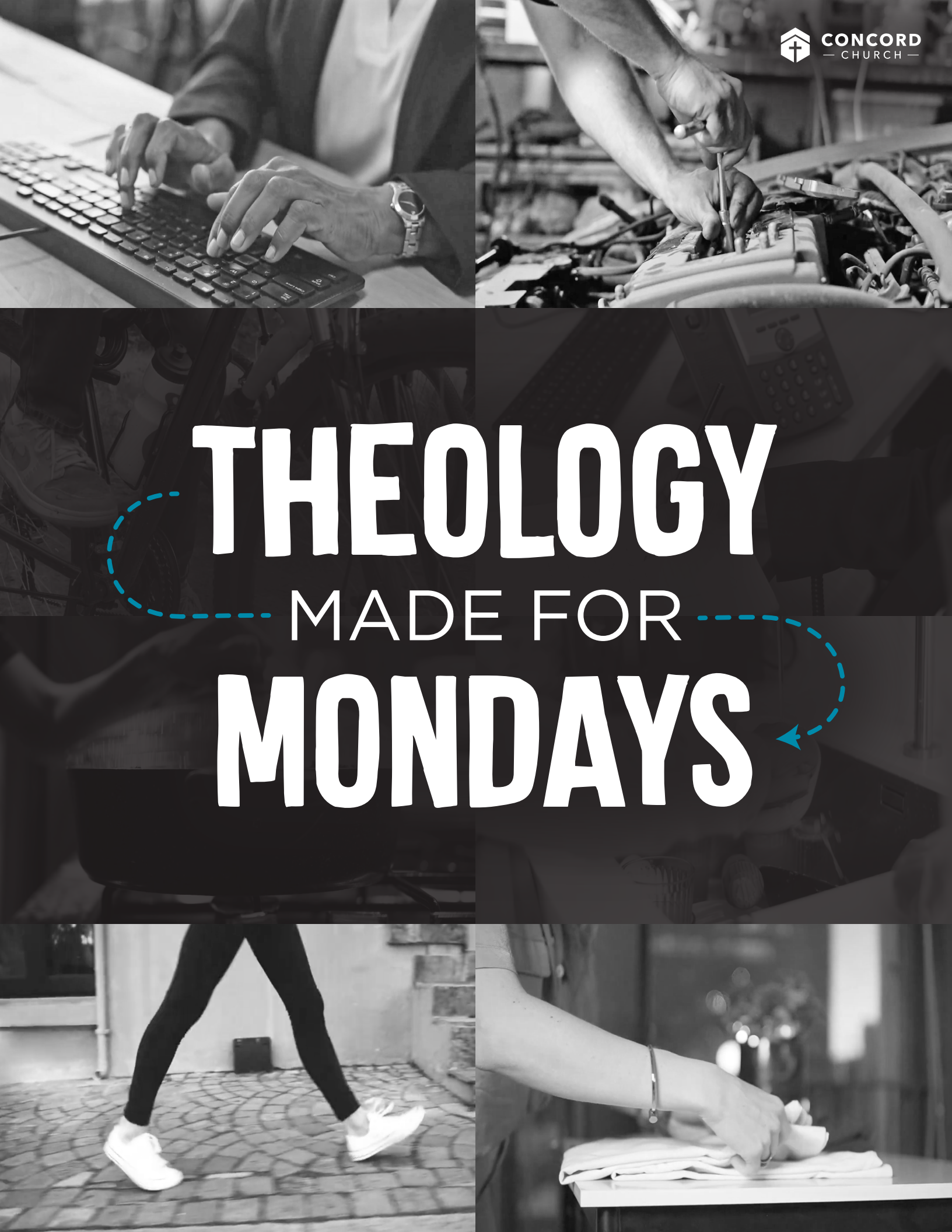




THEOLOGY

MADE FOR

MONDAYS



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INTRODUCTION



The average person doesn't pay much attention to theology. For many people, Biblical doctrine appears as a topic best reserved for academics, trained pastors, and a small percentage of nerdy church attenders who want to know all the answers to Bible trivia.

But is theological discourse only for a select few? I think not, and here are two reasons why I feel this way:

- 1** Theology covers some of the most important topics related to the human experience. These are questions like: where do we come from, what is our purpose in this life and what happens to us when we die?
- 2** Most thinking people have thoughts, reflections and basic ideas about these topics... even when these people happen to be non-religious.

For example, even if a person rejects the idea of God's existence, that position is in and of itself a belief. Or take a person who believes humans cease to exist upon the moment of death. This rejection of an afterlife is a personal belief on a theological matter.

The point is this: both individuals are making a claim on an important topic. Now, I happen to disagree with these two conclusions, but these conclusions are nonetheless theological in nature. As R.C. Sproul said, "Everyone's a theologian. The issue is whether we are good theologians or bad ones."

To that point, the question here is not whether you do theology.
The real question is what kind of theologian are you?

So, on that scale, how are we as churchgoers doing with this topic of study? The evidence-based answer to this question is that most of us are not very good. We know this on a statistical level because of some recent work done by two important ministries.



Every few years Lifeway Research partners with Ligonier Ministries for a nationwide survey of beliefs about theological issues. The latest results are somewhat depressing. Here is one example from this 2025 survey:

“The ... State of Theology survey reveals that the true character of God as displayed in Scripture is either not being taught in many evangelical churches or not understood by individual evangelicals. For example, the survey shows that many evangelicals hold theologically-erroneous beliefs about the nature of God and the sinfulness of man—two critically important areas of doctrine that lay the foundation for all other theological beliefs (emphasis added).”

The survey went on to clarify some other major gaps in church members’ understanding of basic Bible doctrine:

64% *of evangelicals believe that:*
“Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God.”

53% *affirm that:*
“Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.”

53% *believe that:*
“The Holy Spirit is a force, but is not a personal being.”

Houston, we have a problem! Clearly, at a national level we at the local church are not doing enough to develop rich and robust theological thinking for our members.

These sad statistics do bring forward an urgent question: if theology is so important, then why are we so bad at it? I think there are several reasons, but the issues can be distilled down to one thing: theology seems B-O-R-I-N-G! That may sound strange coming from a pastor, but I believe this is the main obstacle for most church attenders. The person responsible for this hurdle of hindrance is not the person in the pew. No, I place the blame on the person in pulpit. Let me explain.



The church is deficient in theological understanding because pastors either avoid these topics (thus making the deficiency worse) or they plow through these topics in an abstract, mind-numbing way that seems untethered to everyday life. There exists a disconnect between the theology mentioned on Sunday and the reality coming at us on Monday. And, confession time, I know this to be true, because I am part of the “they” that is in this paragraph. I’ve certainly been guilty of preaching in abstract ways where the sermon points don’t land into your real life.

Thus, part of the blame should be placed upon people who do what I do: preach and teach. We do need to preach theology, but we need to do this in a way that better tracks with the challenges and pitfalls normal people face. The good news is that we may be seeing a younger generation who is more open to receiving theological training and preaching that is connected to everyday life.

Consider these recent insights from Barna Group’s 2025 study, “New Barna Data: Young Adults Lead a Resurgence in Church Attendance.”

A HISTORIC REVERSAL

For the first time in decades, younger adults (Gen Z and Millennials) are now the most regular churchgoers, outpacing older generations who once formed the backbone of church attendance.

FURTHERMORE

Millennials and Gen Z Christians are attending church more frequently than before and much more often than older generations. The typical Gen Z churchgoer now attends 1.9 weekends per month, while Millennial churchgoers average 1.8 times, which is a steady upward shift since the lows seen during the pandemic.

And, then, here is the biggest statement from this recent research: “These are easily the highest rates of church attendance among young Christians since they first hit Barna’s tracking.” That’s a zinger of a sentence!

So, clearly God is moving among this young generation. Since this is true, I think we should respond to their curiosity with biblically-sound reasoning about God and His work in this world. This means we must dive into theology.



THEOLOGY MADE FOR MONDAYS

I chose the name of this series for a particular purpose. My main goal is not to just preach good sermons on Sunday (which is a good goal and something I strive to do each week).

My more important target is for Christ-followers to embrace these wonderful truths of God's creation and apply them to their lives starting on Monday morning.

I desire to lead people to look at all of God's creation through the lens of Scripture. Not in a way that ignores the physical world, but in a way that helps them understand this world with a deeper appreciation of the foundational structures that make up our real, everyday lives.

To that end, I have tried to create a sermon series and study that is both:

- **Biblically faithful when you hear it on Sunday**
- **Practically helpful so you can apply it on Monday**

The template for this approach comes, not surprisingly, from Paul the Apostle. This gifted preacher/teacher explained his preaching style to some church members from Ephesus. In his preaching, Paul stated that he proclaimed the “whole will of God” (Acts 20:27, biblically faithful) and at the same time he did not hesitate to “preach anything that would be helpful” (20:20, practically helpful). My prayer is that I follow his lead in providing you with a helpful guide on life's most pressing issues.

The following page features a breakdown of the two main sections of each weekly lesson: Sermon Notes and a small group Discussion Guide.



1 SERMON NOTES

The sermon notes have three (and sometimes four) “WHAT” questions. Here’s how they function.



WHAT?

This section tells you what you need to know and introduces you to the basic doctrine. The goal is to show how this doctrine is expressed throughout the Bible while developing a focus on one central passage.



SO WHAT?

This section focuses on the teaching you need to consider and explains the weighty implications of these doctrines. The goal here is to ponder why this doctrine matters and how it relates to other ideas.



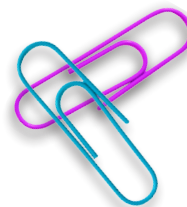
NOW WHAT?

This section prepares you for Monday and will tease out how this concept might be applied in your everyday life. The goal here is to translate these teachings into actions.



WHAT ELSE?

Occasionally I will add this section to provide extra material or resources for you to explore. The goal here is to allow you to grow even deeper in your understanding of these massive topics.





2 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

This portion of the workbook is to help you interact with the previous Sunday's message. This is written for a group setting and not for an individual study. So, to get the most out of these lessons, please join a group.

Here are the three options:

■ **OPTION 1: CONNECTION CLASS**

For many of you, you will be going through this material during your Connection Class here at Concord on Sundays at 9 a.m. If you are not part of a Connection Class, then please contact the church to join one.

■ **OPTION 2: WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY**

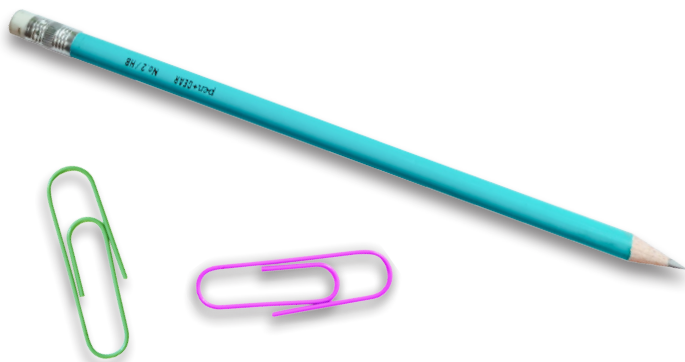
If Sunday morning doesn't work for your schedule, then join us on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. You can register on Concord's event page at concordchurch.com/events.

■ **OPTION 3: START YOUR OWN**

If you have the gift of teaching and feel led to start a class, please reach us here at the office at 314-843-3500. You can also contact me directly at rustyw@concordlife.com.

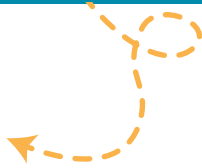
Oh, and here is one other pro-tip!

Please bring your workbook with you to church every week. This will help you with note taking and be helpful during the class discussion. If you forget your workbook, don't worry. We will have abbreviated notes for all members and attenders (apart from the workbook).





A FINAL NOTE



Before we jump into this material, I wanted to explain why theological thinking aids in our growth as Jesus followers. The follow provides three solid reasons why this discipline is worthy of your time and attention.

REASON #1: Good Theology Will Help You See Beyond the Physical World

Spending time reflecting on God's wisdom will help you understand the underpinnings of our world. Theology, when done with an open, studious heart, will lead you to see the foundational truths our physical world sits upon. We can understand more clearly the "why" behind the "what" of our daily experience.

REASON #2: Good Theology Will Help You Understand Who You Are

When you contemplate God's work in the universe, you will discover that your presence here is part of His plan. And, once you begin to see your place in the heavenly Father's operation, you will gain a better sense of who you truly are and how your life fits into God's will.

REASON #3: Good Theology Will Anchor Your Heart in an Ever-changing World

Trends are constantly changing. The social norms of 60 years ago are outdated and forgotten. Some might even say the social norms of 60 minutes ago may no longer apply. The shifting sands of popular public opinion are not a strong foundation to build upon. But those who lean into this study will discover rock-solid truths on which to establish their calling and future.

Now, good theology does not remove all the mystery surrounding God and His works. None of us can unravel the splendor and majesty of the holy God with a few printed pages. But good theology does equip us to better understand and explain our place on this planet. And my hope is that these truths you hear on Sunday will give you a new and bright confidence for your upcoming Monday.

Let's get started!

Pastor Rusty



SERMON 1: SCRIPTURE



Main passage: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Other pertinent passages: Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21

THE BIG IDEA

The Holy Bible was written by humans, is divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to humanity. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.



WHAT?

- **Divine Origin:** All Scripture is breathed out by God, making it completely trustworthy and authoritative.
- **Total Sufficiency:** The Bible provides everything a believer needs for spiritual maturity and right living.
- **Transformative Purpose:** God uses His Word to teach truth, correct error and train us in righteousness.



SO WHAT?

- The Doctrine of Scripture is the foundational doctrine on which all other doctrines stand.
- If there is no such thing as God-breathed Scripture, then we have no way of judging if a concept, thought or action is holy or unholy.
- If there is no sanctioned Scripture, we would not know how to handle real-life issues like money, marriage, sex, authority and life after death.
- If there is no word from God, we would not understand what Jesus has done for us.



NOW WHAT?

Let the daily Bible reading do three things:

1. Confront me when I am wrong about life.

- What decisions have you made this past week that need correction?

2. Comfort me when I am wronged by life.

- What fears have overtaken you? How has God addressed those concerns in His word?

3. Conform me when I am walking through life.

- Is the text of the Bible shaping your thought life? Where do you see Jesus in the Scriptures? And how does that image of Jesus shape your thinking about your daily concerns?

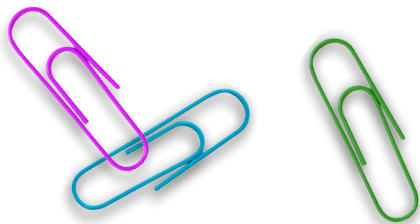
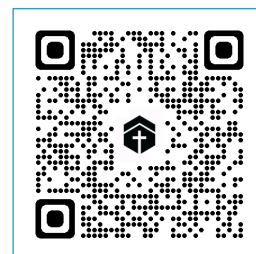


WHAT ELSE?

“Can we trust the Bible?”

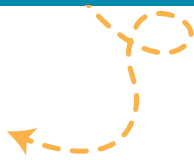
That’s a fair question.

Dr. Tim Keller answers this question during The Veritas Forum’s Q&A session at Columbia University in 2008. Scan the QR code (or visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZAPFKXMy_Y) to watch this quick video.





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK’S MESSAGE

- 1. What impacted you from last week’s message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

- 2. Pastor Rusty stated that the doctrine of Scripture is the foundation for all other doctrine. What did he mean by that? Do you feel that is true? Explain your answer.

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

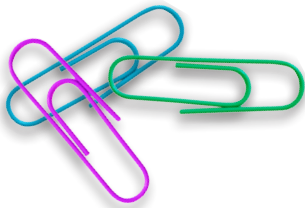
- 1. How old were you when you first started reading the Bible?



2. What part of the Bible do you really enjoy? What part of the Bible do you avoid or maybe feel a little intimidated by?

3. What is one question you have about your Bible?

4. How important is daily Bible reading in your life right now?





READ GOD’S WORD AND DISCUSS

1 TIMOTHY 3:12-17

- 1. In this passage Paul ties together the idea of real persecution (v. 12-13), along with encouraging believers to continue learning Scripture.
 - a) How do you think persecution and following the guidance of the Bible go together?
 - b) Have you ever faced persecution for standing up for your beliefs? What was that like?

- 2. Notice how Paul defines the purpose of the Bible:
 - a) Teaching (the Bible helps me gain knowledge about God)
 - b) Rebuking (the Bible helps correct what I get wrong about God)
 - c) Correcting (the Bible helps me adjust my behaviors for God)
 - d) Training (the Bible helps me become more like Christ)
 - i. Of these four, mark the one purpose you seek out the most from your Bible.
 - ii. Of these four, mark the one purpose that you seek out the least.
 - iii. Why do you think that is the case?
 - iv. When was the last time you had the Bible correct or rebuke you?



MONDAY'S APPLICATION

This week, when you are reading the Bible, allow the Bible to:

- Confront you when you are wrong about life.
 - o Write out or discuss what decisions you have made this past week that need correction.

- Comfort you when you are wronged by life.
 - o Write out or discuss what fears have overtaken you. How has God addressed these concerns in His word?

- Conform you when you are walking through life.
 - o Share how the text of the Bible is shaping your thought life. Where do you see Jesus in the Scriptures? And how does that image of Jesus shape your thinking about your daily concerns?



SERMON 2: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY



Main Passage: Isaiah 46:9-10

Other Pertinent Passages:

Genesis 50:20; Exodus 33:19; Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6-8; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Job 42:2; Psalm 22:28; 47:7-8; 103:19; 115:3; 135:6; Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; Isaiah 14:24; 46:9-10; 40:15-17; Daniel 2:21; Acts 17:26

THE BIG IDEA

There is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.



WHAT?

- **Matchless Status:** Yahweh stands completely alone as the unique, all-powerful God of history.
- **Perfect Foreknowledge:** God declares the end from the beginning, meaning nothing catches Him by surprise.
- **Unstoppable Will:** His divine purposes always succeed, and His counsel will stand forever.



SO WHAT?

- Life's events may seem out of control, but the better way to understand this reality is that they are not out of control just because they are out of **your** control.
- Because we are not sovereign, mystery and confusion will remain.
 - Sovereignty demands omniscience. Without great wisdom, this great strength would collapse in on itself. Also, it takes immense power to hold all knowable things. Yet we as humans are neither sovereign nor omniscient, so we must live with imperfect knowledge and marred perceptions.
- The sovereignty of God's rule over the world gives us all the hope we need to get out of bed each morning (Psalm 34:18).



NOW WHAT?

- What part of your life are you reluctant to connect with God's sovereign rule? Pray today to surrender over that section of your world to the heavenly Father.
- Obey God in the now, even when you don't understand the why and how.
 - What area of your life are you nervous to fully obey God? Why is it difficult to lean into God's loving rule and reign in these parts of your life?
 - When hardships come, do you sometimes belittle or dismiss the doctrine of God's sovereignty? Why?



WHAT ELSE?

One of the most discussed questions surrounding God's sovereignty is how that doctrine impacts the salvation of individuals. For those interested in diving into the debate of election and free will as it relates to salvation, I highly recommend the book, "Perspectives on Election" by Jack Cottrell, Clark Pinnock, Robert Reymond, Thomas Talbott, Bruce Ware and Chad Brand.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK’S MESSAGE

- 1. What impacted you from last week’s message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?
- 2. What does it mean that nothing catches God by surprise?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

- 1. Share a moment when you felt comforted by God’s power. Now share a moment when you felt God was absent. Describe how the two seasons were different and how they may have felt similar.
- 2. What is one question you wish God would answer? Does not having an answer to this question rattle your trust in God? Explain why or why not.



READ GOD'S WORD

ISAIAH 46:1-13

In this passage, Isaiah is reminding his readers of the weakness of the Babylonian gods (Bel and Nebo). They were so weak that they had to be carried around on a cart (v. 1) and these deities were unable to answer (v. 7). These types of gods have no power. This is to be contrasted with the God of Abraham. Read each passage and then call out the power and capacities of our God represented in each one.

- Isaiah 46:3-4
- Isaiah 46:10
- Isaiah 46:9
- Isaiah 46:11

DISCUSS

What types of modern false gods do we sometimes follow? What are the weaknesses of these false messiahs or golden calves?

MONDAY'S APPLICATION

- Identify and write the part of your life you are reluctant to connect with God's sovereign rule. Pray today to surrender that section of your world over to the heavenly Father.
- Obey God in the now, even when you don't understand the why and how.
 - What area of your life are you nervous to fully obey God? Why is it difficult to lean into God's loving rule and reign over these parts of your life?
 - This week some hardships are coming your way. Make a commitment now to cling to God's loving rule over you, even in the middle of challenging times.



SERMON 3: CREATION



Main Passage: Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16–17

THE BIG IDEA

God alone is the Creator of all things. By His sovereign will, infinite wisdom and divine power, He created the heavens and the earth and all that exists, both visible and invisible, for His glory and according to His good purposes. We affirm that the creation account recorded in Scripture is true and trustworthy, revealing God as the intentional and personal Creator of the universe. Creation did not arise by chance, necessity, or any purely naturalistic process, but through the purposeful work of God, who continually sustains all things by His power (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24-28; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 4:11).



WHAT?

- **Supernatural Origin:** God created the entire universe out of nothing by the power of His spoken word.
- **Christ-centered Design:** All things were created by Jesus Christ, through Him, and directly for His glory.
- **Continuous Sustenance:** Christ actively holds the entire universe together at this very moment.



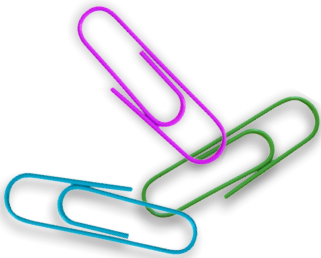
SO WHAT?

- We build, but only God creates.
- If there is no personal God behind creation, then we are made up by irrational, impersonal forces that lack any transcendent meaning or higher, moral framework.
- If God did not create you, then you have no soul. Any sense of a personal identity is a farce. There is no “you” inside of you.
- If God did not create you, you have no free will.



NOW WHAT?

- See yourself as an ambassador of God on this planet.
 - Caring for the planet did not originate with modern- day liberals. God instituted loving concern for the land by writing special commands into the Old Testament Law. For example:
 - » Leviticus 25:1-7: Sabbath rest for the land
 - » Leviticus 25:23-24: The land belongs to God
 - » Deuteronomy 20:19-20: Do not destroy fruit trees
- See yourself as belonging to God.
- See everything in creation as God's property. This includes:
 - Money/Sex/Power
 - Ask yourself this question: "What is God's purpose for _____?"
- Spend time outdoors this week specifically praising God for His creative power.





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK’S MESSAGE

1. What impacted you from last week’s message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

2. Did it surprise you that God instructed the ancient Israelites to care for the land?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

Some do not believe in God. But holding that position has some huge assumptions attached to it. The following are three. Discuss and interact with them.

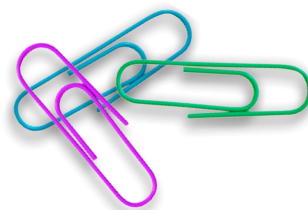
1. If there is no personal God behind creation, then we are made up by irrational, impersonal forces that lack any transcendent meaning or higher, moral framework.



2. If God did not create you, then you have no soul. Any sense of a personal identity is a farce. There is no “you” inside of you.
 - o If there is no God or spiritual beings of any kind, then you do not have any type of spiritual nature to you.

3. If God did not create you, you have no free will.
 - o Without a soul, your thoughts are simply the product of chemical reactions inside your body that you have little or no control over.

If your very body is God’s property, then how should that idea impact the way you treat your body?





READ GOD’S WORD

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

- 1. Read this poem out loud. Notice the two stanzas (vs. 15-17 and vs. 18-20). Do you see a difference in the theme between these two stanzas? In the same way that Jesus created the world, he is also creating a new body, the Church.

- 2. Write down all the ways that Paul describes Jesus.

- 3. How does viewing Jesus as Creator change your perception of Him?

- 4. Paul states that, in Him, all things hold together. Imagine what that means for your reality right now. How do you think Jesus is holding our existence together?



MONDAY'S APPLICATION

- This week see yourself as an ambassador of God on this planet.
 - Caring for the planet did not originate with modern-day liberals. God instituted loving concern for the land by writing special commands into the Old Testament Law. For example:
 - » Leviticus 25:1-7: Sabbath rest for the land
 - » Leviticus 25:23-24: The land belongs to God
 - » Deuteronomy 20:19-20: Do not destroy fruit trees
 - What can you do to help care for this planet?

- If your body belongs to God, write down how you may treat your body differently this week.

- This week utilize this wise question by asking yourself: "What is God's purpose for _____?" What should you place in this blank?

- Spend time outdoors this week specifically praising God for His creative power.



SERMON 4: HUMANS AS IMAGE-BEARERS



Main Passage: Genesis 1:26-27

Other Pertinent Passages:

Genesis 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalm 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31, 15:19, 21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11

THE BIG IDEA

Humans are the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation and thus, the gift of gender is part of the goodness of God's creation. Because humans bear the image and likeness of God, every individual has value and is worthy of dignity and respect.



THE WHAT?

- **Special Creation:** Human beings did not evolve by chance, but are purposefully made by God.
 - o You are not an accident. You have:
 - » A Design (each part of you is crafted by God)
 - » A Destiny (your future is connected to your design)
 - » A Dignity (your value comes from God)
 - o I see the earth and universe as extremely old, but at the same time, I reject unguided, Darwinistic-thinking about humans. I also believe in a historical Adam.
 - » With perfect conditions in the garden and a perfect connection with God, there was no reason for our first parents to age.
 - o Here are a few books to consider on this topic:
 - » "The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry" by S. Joshua Swamidass
 - » "The Adam Project" by Tim Stafford
 - » "Darwin's Black Box" by Micheal Behe



- **The Divine Image:** Every human reflects God's image, giving them inherent dignity, value and worth.
- **Gender and Role:** God intentionally created humanity male and female to complement one another.
- See "The Body God Gives: A Biblical Response to Transgender Theory" by Robert S. Smith.



SO WHAT

- If humans have real value, then the way we treat them has real consequences.
- Have you met many people who felt there was nothing wrong with the mistreatment and abuse of human beings? Probably not. We all have some kind of moral law. This only makes sense if humans have intrinsic, God-given worth.
- If we are created by God, then we are created to worship God.
- For parents, we should see our children as gifts from God, not trophies for our self-esteem.
- Violence is wrong because it is an attack on God Himself.
- Missing this critical doctrine leads to:
 - Mistreatment of the sick
 - Abortion for the unborn
 - Hatred for the refugee
 - Disdain for the disabled



NOW WHAT?

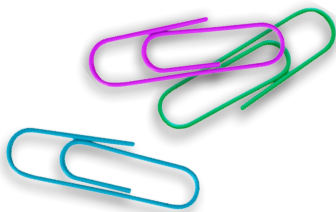
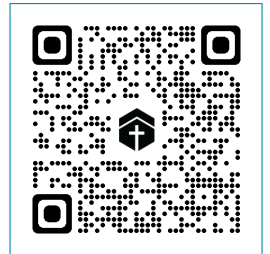
- Treat every person you meet with absolute respect, regardless of differences.
- Protect vulnerable human life, such as the unborn, the elderly and the needy.
 - Think of how doctors treat patients in the emergency room.
 - It is not based upon merit, passed actions or social status.



WHAT ELSE

Many families have been confronted with questions about sex and gender identity. If so, then you know that this is bigger than a theological position. This is personal.

One of the best-written documents that helps speak to this from a theological framework is “The Nashville Statement,” by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW). This document is clear, pastoral and deeply-rooted in a biblical understanding of this hot topic. To access it, scan the QR Code (or visit <https://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The-Nashville-Statement.pdf>).





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

1. What impacted you from last week's message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

2. How does it impact your sense of self to know that the God of the universe designed you to be you?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

1. While we uphold that we all bear the image of God, sometimes loving a person who is different than you is a challenge. Consider the following:
 - a) It's difficult to be kind to someone who is unkind.
 - b) It's difficult to forgive someone who is unforgiving.
 - c) It's difficult to be sensitive to someone who is insensitive.



2. But what happens if we retaliate against these kinds of people?

3. If we retaliate against someone who is insensitive or unkind, are we not becoming like him or her?

READ GOD’S WORD _____

GENESIS 1:26-31

1. What are the action words for the first humans (write them out)?

2. What are the two genders assigned to the first humans?



3. What did God give to the first parents?

4. What was God's estimation of this arrangement He made for the first parents?

5. What does this say to us about God's placement of humans in this world?

MONDAY'S APPLICATION

- Every person you meet this week is here on purpose and made by God. Treat every person you meet with absolute respect, regardless of the differences between you.
- We should protect vulnerable human life, such as the unborn, the elderly and the needy. How can you actionize these ideas this week?
- We should care for our own bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit.



SERMON 5: SIN



Main Passages: Romans 3:23; 5:12; Genesis 3:1-7

Other Pertinent Passages:

Genesis 3:1-19; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 6:23; James 1:14-15; 1 John 1:8; 1:9

THE BIG IDEA

In the beginning humans were innocent of sin and endowed by their Creator with freedom of choice. By their free choice, Adam and Eve sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, the first parents transgressed the command of God, and fell from their original innocence whereby their posterity inherited a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as humans are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.



THE WHAT?

- **Historical Rebellion:** Sin entered the world through Adam's literal, historic disobedience in the garden.
- **Total Brokenness:** Every human inherits a corrupt nature, falling completely short of God's holy standard (Romans 3).
- **Spiritual Death:** The ultimate wage of sin is spiritual alienation and eternal separation from God.
 - o Not because we are just doing a sinful thing, but because we are sinners by nature.
 - o This sinful nature cannot withstand God's holy presence without some intervening force.



SO WHAT?

- Without the concept of sin, it is hard to explain human tragedies, like hate, injustice, murder and rape.
- Consequently, if you do not believe in the concept of human sin, then you will think humans can overcome their problems by their own efforts or ingenuity.
- Any system we put into place to bring help will always be conditioned by the sinful forces at play.

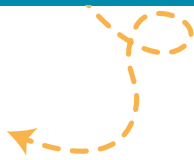


NOW WHAT?

- First, see in Psalm 51 that sin is connected to the heart.
 - All sin starts in the heart and then hurts the heart.
- Second, diagnose your sin.
 - View sin as selfishness.
 - View sin as trying to be your own “god.”
- Third, confess a specific hidden sin to God right now without making excuses.
- Fourth, receive grace without resistance.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK’S MESSAGE

- 1. What impacted you from last week’s message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

- 1. How old were you when you first learned of sin?
- 2. How does viewing personal sin as rebellion against God, rather than an imperfection or mistake, change our understanding of sin?



3. Name a sin that is so easy to see in other people, but not so easy to see in yourself.

4. How does seeing today's social problems as sin problems help us better understand them?

READ GOD'S WORD

ROMANS 3:10-18

1. Note that Paul is quoting the Old Testament, so his statement on sin carries with it God's authority (v. 10).

2. Write out how Paul describes humans (and in this context he is referring to both Jews and Gentiles).



3. How would you describe Paul’s diagnosis of humans?

4. How does that diagnosis differ from a modern understanding of humans and their problems?

MONDAY’S APPLICATION

- This week read Psalm 51. Here you will see that sin is connected to the heart.
 - o All sin starts in the heart and then hurts the heart.
 - o Consider how your sin has hurt your heart.
- Second, diagnose your sin.
 - o View sin as selfishness (meeting my needs, my way, in my time).
 - o View sin as trying to be your own “god.”
- Third, confess a specific hidden sin to God right now without making excuses.
- Fourth, receive grace without resistance.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



SERMON 6: SALVATION BY GRACE



Main Passage: Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 3:21–31

Other Pertinent Passages:

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14–17; 6:2–8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21–26; 27:22; 28:6; Luke 1:68–69; 2:28–32; John 1:11–14, 29; 3:3, 21, 36; 5:24; 10:9, 28–29; 15:1–16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30–31; 17:30–31; 20:32; Romans 1:16–18; 2:4; 3:23–25; 4:3; 5:8–10; 6:1–23; 8:1–18, 29–39; 10:9–10, 13; 13:11–14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 30; 6:19–20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22–25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8–22; 4:11–16; Philippians 2:12–13; Colossians 1:9–22; 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 2:1–3; 5:8–9; 9:24–28; 11:1; 12:8, 14; James 2:14–26; 1 Peter 1:2–23; 1 John 1:6–2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1; 22:5

THE BIG IDEA

Salvation by God's grace involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour who, by His own blood, obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.



THE WHAT?

- **Unearned Favor:** Salvation is completely a gift of God's grace, not a reward for good behavior.
- **Received by Faith:** We receive Christ's righteousness solely through faith, completely apart from human works (Romans 3:20).
- **You Are Saved, Not Because You Are Good:** You are saved because God is good.
- **Saved for Good Works:** You are not saved *by* good works, but you are saved *for* good works. Your good works do not bring you into salvation. But your good works can lead others toward salvation.



SO WHAT?

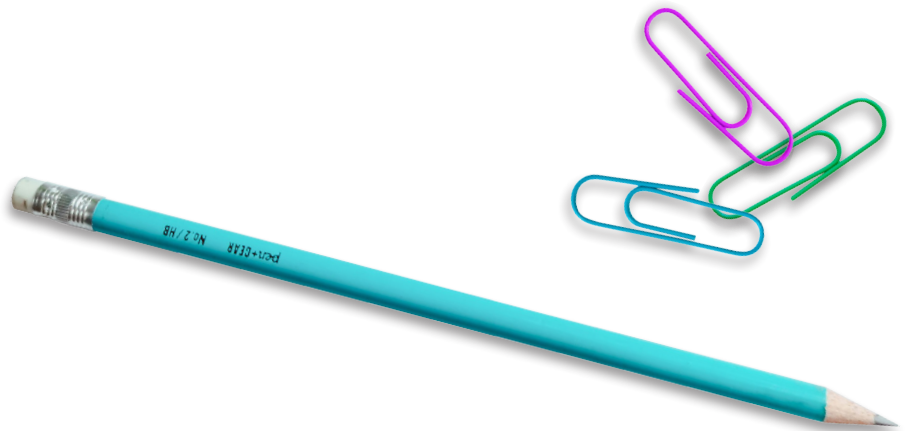
1. Grace produces assurance rather than uncertainty.
2. Grace produces humility rather than pride.
3. Grace produces gratitude-based obedience.
4. Grace creates equal standing before God.
5. Grace provides a real solution to guilt.
6. Grace fuels compassion toward others.

Many world religions can be summarized as: “What must I do to reach God?”
The Christian doctrine of salvation by grace answers: “God has come to save sinners through Jesus Christ, and salvation is received by faith rather than earned by works.”



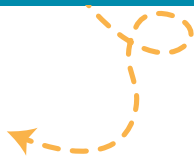
NOW WHAT?

- You must curse works-based salvation (just like Paul did in Galatians 1:6-9).
- Worship God because of His grace and by His grace.
- Because we are graced, we must now grace others.





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK’S MESSAGE

- 1. What impacted you from last week’s message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

- 1. Remember the last time someone forgave you. What were the emotions associated with that moment?

- 2. Have you ever felt like your sin was too great for God to forgive? Why are we sometimes resistant to embracing God’s full grace over us?



3. Recall the last time you received an unexpected, but wonderful, gift? Did that come from someone who loved you? How does viewing God's grace as a gift help us understand God's love for us?

READ GOD'S WORD

ROMANS 3:21-31

Familiarize yourself with these often-repeated terms of this passage and their definitions. Once you have internalized these ideas, read the passage aloud. If it's helpful, review the definitions once you come across the words in the reading.

- **Justification:** Being declared righteous by God. In this passage, justification is a legal verdict God gives to sinners because of Christ's atoning work, not because of their own obedience.
- **Righteousness:** God's perfect moral standard and His saving action to make people right with Him. In Romans 3, "the righteousness of God" refers to God providing righteousness to sinners through Christ.
- **Belief:** A trusting response to what God has done in Christ. Belief is the human act of receiving God's gift of righteousness.
- **Faith:** Active trust in Jesus Christ, meaning relying on His work rather than one's own. In Romans 3, faith is the means by which justification is received.
- **Grace:** God's unearned favor toward sinners. In this passage, grace is the source of salvation, meaning God freely gives what humans cannot earn.

MONDAY'S APPLICATION

- You must curse works-based salvation (just like Paul did in Galatians 1:6-9).
- Worship God on this upcoming Sunday because of His grace and by His grace.
- Now that you have been graced, you must grace others with forgiveness.



SERMON 7: THE CHURCH



Main Passages: Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Matthew 16:13-20

Other Pertinent Passages:

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3

THE BIG IDEA

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers:

- Associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel
- Observing the two ordinances of Christ
- Governed by His laws
- Exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word
- Seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth

Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. The church's two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon.



THE WHAT?

- **Jesus Established the Church:** The church is important for the simple fact that Jesus instituted it.
- **Corporate Unity:** The local church is a single body made of many unique, vital members.
 - You need community. And our community needs you.
 - Our diversity built around unity is our strength.
- **Mutual Encouragement:** Believers must regularly gather to stir up one another to love and do good works.
 - All good things in faith come AFTER regular faithful attendance.
 - You are in conflict with the Father if you ignore the Bride (Ephesians 5:25-27, 31-32).
- **Has Two Offices:** The Bible instructs us on the two main offices of the church (1 Timothy 3:1-13).
 - These are:
 - a) Deacon
 - b) Elder/Pastor
 - The Bible has full authority to direct the arrangement of the church. This must include the main offices, for the church is not a business, nor a secular institution. The Church is the active body of Christ and under the headship of Christ.
- **Gospel Centered:** The first seven books of the New Testament have clear commands for us to share the gospel message with others.
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - Mark 16:15
 - Luke 24:45-47
 - John 20:21
 - Acts 1:8
 - Romans 1:16
 - 1 Corinthians 9:20-23



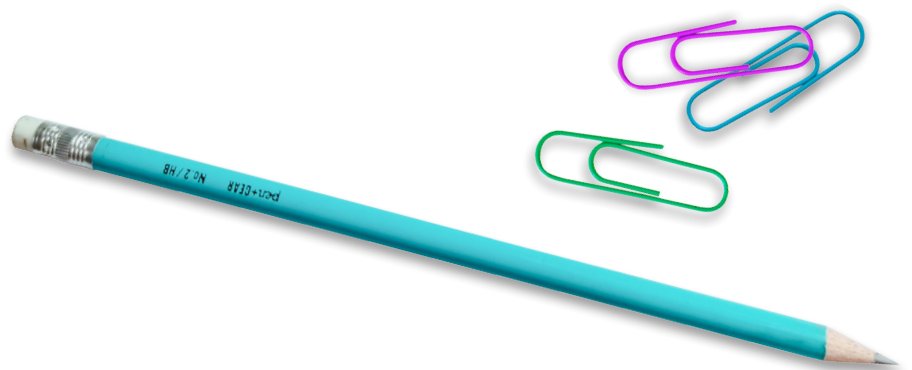
SO WHAT?

- God designed us to live in community (for He Himself is a holy community).
- Jesus has called us to invest in the community of the Church.
- The Holy Spirit will empower us to serve both inside and outside the church walls.



NOW WHAT?

- If you are not a regular attender, then show up.
- If you are not a member, then sign up.
- If you are not learning, then step in.
- If you are not serving, then step up.
- If you are not giving, then pitch in.
- In all of these, your presence is powerful.





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

1. What impacted you from last week's message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

2. What do you see as some of the benefits of being a faithful attender of a local church?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

1. How has your life been impacted by the local church?

2. Have you identified your spiritual gift(s)? If so, how are you using it inside the local church?



3. Remember a time you saw Concord Church caring for its members. What are some ways we could improve on this?
- _____
- _____
- _____
4. The New Testament often illustrates the church as a bride. How does this imagery communicate God’s love for the church?
- _____
- _____
- _____

READ GOD’S WORD _____

HEBREWS 10:24-25

As you read this passage, keep in mind: there were two forces working against their commitment to the local church.

- a) These believers were facing cultural persecution from the Roman officials.
- b) These believers were facing personal antagonization from their fellow Jewish counterparts for denying their Mosaic roots.

In the midst of this persecution, the author tells the church to do these three things.

1. Draw near to God (v. 22).
- o Open up our life to God’s presence and promptings.
 - o Discuss: how can you make your life more open to God’s presence?
- _____
- _____
- _____



2. Hold to hope (v. 23).

- o Remember, you are never out of the fight.
- o Discuss: when are you most tempted to give up hope for God's best in your life?

3. Spur on one another toward love and good deeds (v. 24).

- o Your story can inspire someone else. Be present to share it.
- o Discuss: what do you feel is your most inspirational story of God's work in your life? Write it out. Don't just memorize this, internalize it. And then be prepared to share it when the Holy Spirit prompts you.

MONDAY'S APPLICATION

Here is Pastor Rusty's challenge to us as a congregation. Identify where you are on this list. And then commit the next step.

- If you are not a regular attender, then show up.
- If you are not an official member, then sign up.
- If you are not learning, then step in.
- If you are not serving, then step up.
- If you are not giving, then pitch in.
- If you are doing these things, then stand strong.
- In all of these, know that your presence is powerful.



SERMON 8: ETERNITY



Main Passage: 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 21:1-4; Matthew 25:46

Other Pertinent Passages:

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64;
Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19, 26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31;
Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21;
Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14;
2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7; 1 John 2:28; 3:2;
Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1; 22:13

THE BIG IDEA

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth, the dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.



THE WHAT?

- **Two Eternal Destinies:** Every soul faces a conscious eternity, either in eternal punishment or eternal life.
 - Because eternity is real, the Gospel must remain central to the mission of the Church.
 - The only power that will bring us to heaven is not the right politics, party or profession. The only power that will bring us to heaven is the Gospel. For only the Gospel has the power to save.
 - The Gospel is critical because eternity is real.
- **Ultimate Renewal:** God will destroy sin and create a literal new heaven and a new earth.



- **Perfect Fellowship:** Believers will dwell forever in the direct, joyful presence of God with no more pain.
 - You will be the real you that God created you to be.
 - You will be in fellowship with your people.
 - » Deuteronomy 32:50: God tells Moses he will be “gathered to your people,” as Aaron was.
 - » Judges 2:9: Joshua is buried “in the territory of his inheritance.”
 - » 2 Samuel 17:23: Ahithophel is buried “in the tomb of his father.”
 - » 1 Kings 2:10: David “slept with his fathers” and is buried in the city of David.
 - » 1 Kings 11:43: Solomon “slept with his fathers” and is buried in the city of David.
 - » 1 Kings 14:31: Rehoboam is buried “with his fathers.”
 - » 1 Kings 15:8: Abijam is buried “with his fathers.”
 - » 1 Kings 22:40: Ahab “slept with his fathers.”
 - You will serve and participate in the community life of heaven (Revelation 3:1-3).



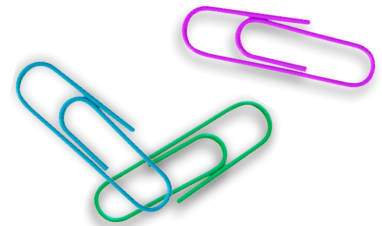
SO WHAT?

- Here's why we should believe in Hell:
 - *Because sin is real.* We can only be terribly bothered by the idea of Hell if we are terribly bothered by the idea of sin.
 - *Because God truly is holy.* Hell only seems offensive when we remove God's glorious holiness in relation to sin. Once we gain a vision for God's maximal glory and perfect splendor, we will better understand the purpose of Hell.
 - *Because the Gospel is still powerful to save.* If there is no Hell, then there is no need for the Gospel's saving power.
- The Human Question: Why would a loving God send people to Hell?
 - *The Bible's answer:* Why would you reject God's free offer of eternal life? If you don't like the idea of God sending people to Hell, then repent of your sins and be saved. You can personally eradicate the discussion of Hell if you accept Christ as your Savior.



NOW WHAT?

- Live today with an eternal perspective, investing your money and time into things that last forever.
- Look for ways to bring eternity into the conversation in everyday temporal situations.
- Promote the Gospel through prayer, mission work and new relationships.





DISCUSSION GUIDE



REVIEW LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

1. What impacted you from last week's message? What was one of the big takeaways for you?

2. What features about our modern world lead us to forget or minimize the concepts of heaven, hell and eternity?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

1. What are you looking forward to when you think about your eternal home in heaven?



2. Why do you think it is awkward to discuss heaven and hell in today’s cultural climate?

3. When you look at all the pertinent passages related to Heaven and Hell (see pg. 48), are you surprised the Bible spent that much time talking about this subject?

4. **[**WARNING: Heavy Question!**]** Do you have friends or loved ones who are outside of Christ? How do you handle the fate of their eternity?

5. As you think about eternity, how does that impact your value of the Gospel message?



READ GOD'S WORD

2 THESSALONIANS 1:3-12

Background on this letter:

- Paul was addressing the church's persecution (which had gotten more intense since the first letter).
- Paul encouraged them to remain faithful while facing this hardship.
- Paul reminded them that persecution could be an expression of their faith in Jesus.

What happens to those outside of the gospel?

- They will be punished (justice is coming, this is certain).
- This punishment will be eternal and everlasting (eternity is real and there are no do-overs).
- This group who rejected God will receive an eternity based upon that decision (if you live life without God, your eternal state will be the same).

MONDAY'S APPLICATION

Consider for just a moment that your sacrificial obedience to Christ and His church could have eternal consequences for other people. Would this reality change the way you view your material possessions? Never underestimate the power of your faithfulness to God's plan for the Gospel.

- Live today with an eternal perspective, investing your money and time into things that last forever.
- Look for ways to bring eternity into the conversation in everyday temporal situations.
- Attend funerals and consider the value of a human soul.
- Promote the Gospel through prayer, mission work and new relationships.



GLOSSARY OF THEOLOGICAL TERMS

Listed here for your convenience are some common theological terms, along with a brief description. While some of these specific terms are not used in this study, you may encounter them during the sermon time, or in other bible studies.

CORE DOCTRINES

- Justification** God’s once-for-all declaration that a sinner is righteous through faith in Christ alone, based on Christ’s substitutionary work.
- Sanctification** The lifelong, Spirit-driven process of becoming more like Christ in holiness and obedience.
- Regeneration** The new birth, the Holy Spirit giving spiritual life to a person so he or she can respond to the gospel.
- Atonement** Christ’s sacrificial death that pays for sin and reconciles believers to God; evangelicals emphasize substitutionary atonement.
- Adoption** God’s act of making believers His children with full rights and privileges in His family.
- Election** God’s choosing of individuals for salvation. Evangelicals differ on how this works, but affirm God’s initiative in salvation.
- Perseverance** The belief that true believers will continue in faith to the end because God perseveres in them.
- Glorification** The final transformation of believers into Christlike perfection at the resurrection.



SCRIPTURE AND REVELATION

- Inerrancy**The conviction that Scripture is without error in all it affirms in its original manuscripts.
- Inspiration**The belief that the Holy Spirit guided biblical authors so that Scripture is truly God's Word.
- Illumination**The Spirit's work enabling believers to understand and apply Scripture.
- Canon**The recognized collection of inspired books that make up the Old and New Testaments.

GOD, CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT

- Trinity**One God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal.
- Incarnation**.....The eternal Son of God taking on human nature in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Hypostatic Union**Christ being fully God and fully man in one person.
- Indwelling**.....The Holy Spirit living within every believer from the moment of salvation.
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit**Evangelicals generally see this as the Spirit's work at conversion, uniting believers to Christ.



SALVATION AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

- Repentance**Turning from sin toward God; inseparable from genuine-saving faith.
- Faith**Trusting in Christ alone for salvation, not merely an intellectual agreement.
- Grace**God’s unearned favor toward sinners, expressed supremely in salvation.
- Works**Acts of obedience that flow from salvation, not a means of earning it.
- Fruit of the Spirit**Christlike character traits produced by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Spiritual Gifts**Abilities given by the Spirit for building up the church.

CHURCH AND WORSHIP

- Ecclesiology**The doctrine of the church (its nature, mission and structure).
- Ordinances**Evangelicals typically recognize two: baptism and the Lord’s Supper, seen as symbolic acts commanded by Christ.
- Baptism**A public declaration of faith, symbolizing union with Christ in His death and resurrection.
- Lord’s Supper**A memorial meal remembering Christ’s sacrifice and proclaiming His return.
- Fellowship**Shared life among believers centered on Christ, Scripture and mutual encouragement.
- Discipleship**Helping believers grow in Christlikeness through teaching, mentoring and accountability.



MISSION AND EVANGELISM

- Gospel** The good news of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and saving grace.
- Evangelism** Sharing the gospel with others in hopes that they will trust Christ.
- Great Commission** Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).
- Apologetics** Defending the truth of Christianity through reasoned arguments and evidence.

SIN, HUMANITY AND THE FALL

- Original Sin** Humanity's inherited sinful nature resulting from Adam's fall.
- Total Depravity** The belief that sin affects every part of human nature, making salvation entirely dependent on God's grace.
- Imago Dei** The teaching that humans are made in the image of God, giving every person dignity and worth.

LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

- Eschatology** The study of end time events such as Christ's return, resurrection, judgment and the new creation.
- Second Coming** Christ's promised, visible return to judge and restoration of all things.
- Millennium** The thousand-year reign mentioned in Revelation 20; evangelicals differ on how to interpret it.
- New Heavens & New Earth** The final, renewed creation where God dwells with His people forever.



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES



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NOTES

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For additional information about this series, and to view our sermons online, scan the QR code (or go to concordchurch.com/theologymadeformondays).

