

UNIT 24

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GOD'S GLORY

IN THE FACE OF

JESUS CHRIST

“Our Struggle Is Not Against Flesh and Blood”

by Kevin M. Jones Sr.

God’s glory is revealed in many ways. One way in which His glory is revealed is through the softening of hearts and the writing of the laws and commands on our hearts. God’s Spirit dwells in us. This imparting of His Spirit brings us from death to life. Because God is with us, we should have faith in Him. Yet placing faith in God does not free us from conflict from the world and actually frustrates Satan. Satan’s desire is to kill, steal, and destroy. God’s desire is to give us life and peace.

KNOWING GOD AND HIS GLORY

Personal knowledge of God should cause us to want to know more of Him. The more we know of Him, the deeper the roots of love and knowledge grow. The more we know of Him, the more we want to serve Him. The more we know of Him the more we should hate our sin and fight for righteousness. We do all of this by faith. Ephesians 2:1-2 tells us that we were

once dead in our sins, in which we walked according to the ways of this world. But this new way of life in God is different than the way we previously walked. The old, sinful ways in us should be daily put to death as the new, Christ-filled way flourishes.

All glory belongs to God, yet 2 Corinthians 2:18 reminds us that we are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into His image. Believers get to experience the glory of the Lord now and later. The world was opposed to Christ because Christ’s glory revealed the sinfulness and hostility of the human heart toward God. The world opposes believers today because as we walk by the Spirit, we reveal the ways and truth of God and the sinfulness bound in the human heart. We must remember when we are speaking the words of Christ that it is He who is being rejected, not us.

FIGHTING THE GREATEST BATTLE

Did you know we are in the middle of the greatest battle ever? Historians will point to the Civil War fought in the United States, WWI, and WWII as battles that devastated the world, and these historians are correct. Yet there is a cosmic battle that preceded all earthly wars, a battle between God and Satan. Although we cannot see this battle, it is happening around us. God is busy trying to prompt us by the power of the Spirit to walk in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control, and Satan is trying to get us to walk in darkness, hate, ungodliness, sexual immorality, and division. We must remember that there is a battle we cannot see. Forgetting this can cause us to place attention and emphasis on the wrong things.

Unfortunately, we do forget that we are fighting this invisible fight. I love camp games. Whether tug-o-war, soccer, tag, or other relays, it is usually easy to know who is on what team. Why? It's because each team usually has a color scheme associated with their team. These color schemes may include bandannas, ribbons, silly string, T-shirts, and face

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paint. Camp teams are easily identifiable. Sadly, Satan, others who reject Christ, and the work that they're doing are not usually as clearly identifiable. It's sometimes difficult to see the spiritual battles going on in the world and around us. So we need to be alert and on the lookout for activities that are in opposition to God's Word and way. We need to be aware of the underlying evils that attempt to dethrone God as sovereign.

But all is not lost. It's a bizarre yet comforting reality to have an active enemy that is already defeated. But that is the truth we live by. Derwin Gray reminds us: "Jesus resoundingly won the battle against humanity's great enemy, the dark powers of sin and death. Sin and death are invasive species that do not belong in God's good creation. Messiah

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attempt to dethrone God as sovereign.*

Since we are free from the penalty of sin and death, we should, with ambitious affection, seek to serve and snatch others from the fire as well.

Jesus triumphed over and disarmed these dark powers with his death and resurrection.”¹ So although we have an enemy, the enemy is already defeated. We further defeat the enemy by placing our faith in God and not ourselves.

BRINGING OTHERS FROM DEATH TO LIFE

In response then, because Jesus is triumphant and the kingdom is already here though not yet fully complete, we are called to tell others of the good news of Christ.

It is healthy for us as believers to remember we also once walked in sin as we try to bring others from death to life. We once were unable to break free from the snares of this world, but we now have been born again.

We must remember, though, that we now have life, and we did not give life to ourselves. We are victorious, but we did not win the battle ourselves. First John 5:4-5 reminds us that those born of God, those who have faith and believe that Jesus is the Son of God, have

conquered the world. This is only because Christ has conquered the world and now lives in us. His power is in us.

It is wonderful to know that God is perfect, omnipotent, righteous, holy, loving, worthy, and is in pursuit of us and our best interest. So we should place our faith in Him and not in things of the world.

To know God is to know that the blood of Christ powerfully purifies us from pride, profaneness, falling in love with perishable things, and the penalty of sin. Since we are free from the penalty of sin and death, we should, with ambitious affection, seek to serve and snatch others from the fire as well. This is a delightful fragrance, pleasing to our Father, and is faith in action that is commanded by Christ.



JESUS IS THE WAY

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus taught that entrance into His kingdom is difficult and only comes through Him.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 13

+ **SETTING:**

The Gospel of Luke is a literary masterpiece, beautifully depicting the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The climax of Luke's Gospel is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, but the heart is the "travel narrative" (Luke 9:51–19:27), where Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). While journeying from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus performed miracles and taught about the kingdom of God and the way of salvation. In Luke 13:22-35, Jesus portrayed Himself as the narrow door of salvation who saves sinners through His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, which would be accomplished in Jerusalem.

DAY 1

READ:

Luke 13:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 13:22-27

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #9: GOD IS ONE

The Bible affirms that God is one, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the *Shema*. In both Old and New Testament times, the advocacy of monotheism (belief in one God) was contrary to the surrounding culture. Where most cultures practiced polytheism (belief in multiple gods) or henotheism (worship of one god with the belief in multiple gods), the people of God knew, based upon God's self-revelation, that Yahweh, the Lord, is the only one true God.

The Winchester Mystery House is a notorious “haunted house” in San Jose, California. Once inhabited by Sarah Winchester, the widow of William Wirt Winchester (owner of Winchester Firearms), the house is a tourist attraction and contains many novel features. One of the most unique features is the doors in the house that lead to nowhere. Some have claimed the doors were designed to confuse “ghosts” and keep them away from Sarah Winchester, who was superstitious. Others claim the structure of the house was altered by an earthquake in 1906. Regardless of the reason for their existence, the doors in the Winchester Mystery House are pointless; they lead nowhere.¹

In Luke 13:22-27, Jesus described Himself as the “narrow door.” No other way of salvation or forgiveness exists. Like the doors in the Winchester Mystery House, every door other than Jesus leads nowhere. This reality has two implications for believers. First, those who profess to be Christians must examine themselves and make sure their faith rests in Christ alone for salvation. He is the only way of salvation. Second, those who profess faith in Christ must share about Him with others. There are not many ways to be saved. There is only one way to be saved, and His name is Jesus. Christians should resolve to tell unbelievers about Jesus, the narrow door of salvation.

How are you pointing others to Christ alone for salvation?

DAY 2

READ:

Luke 13:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 13:28-30

NOTES

In *The Wingfeather Saga*, Andrew Peterson tells the story of the Igiby children: Janner, Tink, and Leeli. Janner Igiby, the oldest child, discovers his deceased father was Esben Wingfeather, the king of the Shining Isle of Anniera. As the oldest son, readers expect Janner to possess a rightful claim to the throne, but the traditions of Anniera are unique. The throne belongs to the younger brother, Tink. The last becomes first. Janner assumes the role of Throne Warden and is responsible for protecting Tink and Leeli. The first becomes last. Throughout the series, Janner resents this reversal and wrestles with his calling as Throne Warden. He eventually makes peace with the role and embraces his responsibility of family protector.

Jesus described the upside-down nature of God's kingdom in Luke 13:28-30. Many of the religious Jews assumed they would be first in God's kingdom, while the Gentiles would be last. Yet Jesus said many who ate with Him and heard Him teach would be cast out of the kingdom of God, while people from the North, South, East, and West would enter God's kingdom and share in His banquet. The first would be last, and the last would be first. This reversal reminds us of two things: (1) familiarity with Jesus is not a substitute for faith in Jesus, and (2) God's grace upends expectations and extends to all people.

What are some other examples of "reversal" in God's kingdom?

DAY 3

READ:

Luke 13:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 13:31-33

NOTES

The movie *Unbroken* portrays the real-life story of Louis Zamperini, a former Olympic athlete who was shot down during combat in WWII. Zamperini spent 47 days in a raft with fellow soldiers before being captured by the Japanese navy. Zamperini was taken to a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp, where he was harassed and beaten. The movie highlights Zamperini's indomitable will, as he refused to let the cruelty of his overseers break him. It also highlights the power of forgiveness, as Zamperini forgave the soldiers for their criminal acts.

Like Zamperini, Jesus was resolved to endure suffering and abuse. The Pharisees and religious leaders questioned His miracles and challenged His teaching. Herod threatened to kill Him if He went to Jerusalem. Yet Jesus would not be swayed. He was committed to completing the mission on which His Father had sent Him. In order to finish His work, Jesus had to travel to Jerusalem, die on the cross, and rise from the dead. He knew the suffering that lay ahead, but He pushed ahead anyway. Why? Because of His love for His Father and us.

How might you express your gratitude to Christ, who endured the cross in order to save you?

DAY 4

READ:

Luke 13:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 13:31-33

NOTES

In the children's book by L. Frank Baum titled *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, a farm girl from Kansas named Dorothy and her dog, Toto, are transported from their home to the land of Oz when a tornado hits their town. Dorothy follows the yellow brick road and eventually arrives in Emerald City, where she meets the wonderful Wizard of Oz. At first, the Great Oz seems powerful and impressive, but Toto knocks over a curtain and reveals the Wizard of Oz is a fraud! The Wizard of Oz is revealed to be a normal man from Omaha, who arrived in Oz via a hot-air balloon.

Christians might be tempted to view God like the wizard in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: an unseen being who is pulling levers and making things happen from some unseen place. Yet the Bible does not depict God's sovereignty this way. His care is personal and gracious. In Luke 13:31-33, Jesus reveals God's plan to redeem humanity, which involves His death on the cross. The journey to Jerusalem is not coincidental. The opposition of Herod is not accidental. These things are all part of God's good plan to save sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Christians, we can take comfort in the fact that God is in control, He is good, and He is working all things out for His glory and our good.

How can Christians take comfort in the truth that God is in control of everything?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"God is sovereign Lord and King, and exerciseth a dominion over the whole world, both heaven and earth. This is so clear, that nothing is more spoken of in Scripture."²

—Stephen Charnock
(1628–1680)

DAY 5

READ:

Luke 13:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 13:34-35

NOTES

Eeyore is a character in the A. A. Milne children's series Winnie the Pooh. He is a donkey that seems to always be the pessimist. To him, everything seems catastrophic or will lead to some bad news. Even still, he is a beloved character.

In Luke 13:34-35, Jesus lamented over Jerusalem's rejection of the Messiah and pronounced judgment on them. Yet He did not leave them without hope. He was not an "Eeyore," focusing exclusively on the negative response of Israel.

Jesus pointed to a future time when His people would recognize Him as Lord and praise Him. He was hopeful and optimistic. As Christians, we can be hopeful and optimistic as well.

Jesus promised to return for His people, and we eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. When He returns, we will receive Him as Lord and worship Him forever!

How can the future return of Christ motivate you to live hopefully and optimistically in the present?

GROUP

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VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"He died to take away our sins for the simple reason that we cannot remove them ourselves. If we could, his atoning death would be unnecessary."³

—John Stott (1921–2011)

POINT 1: The Narrow Door (Luke 13:22-30)

Jesus is the _____ door, the only way to _____.



Why do people seem to bristle at “exclusivity”—the biblical claim that Jesus is the only way of salvation?

KEY DOCTRINE #9: GOD IS ONE

The Bible affirms that God is one, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the Shema. In both Old and New Testament times, the advocacy of _____ (belief in one God) was contrary to the surrounding culture. Where most cultures practiced polytheism (belief in multiple gods) or henotheism (the worship of one god with the belief in multiple gods), the people of God knew, based upon God’s self-revelation, that _____, the Lord, is the only one _____ God.

POINT 2: The Coming Death (Luke 13:31-33)

Jesus faced _____ from Herod and the religious leaders, but He refused to _____ His mission of salvation.



What are some ways obedience to God’s mission might lead to opposition for Christians?

Jesus announced His upcoming death, revealing His _____ and _____ to His mission.



From Day 4: How can Christians take comfort in the truth that God is in control of everything?

POINT 3: The Future Adoration

(Luke 13:34-35)

Jesus _____ over Jerusalem, expressing His desire to _____ for the people of Israel, yet they were _____ to come to Him.



What are some ways people reject God's compassion?

Jesus pronounced _____ on Israel, but He also announced _____ for a future moment when they would call Him _____.



How does the gospel and the coming of Christ give us hope?

MY RESPONSE

Because the way of salvation is narrow, we keep Jesus central in all we do, helping others fix their gaze on Him and trust in Him alone for salvation.

- **HEAD:** How can you communicate the “narrowness” of salvation in a compelling and convincing way?
- **HEART:** In what areas can you confess to God concerning your lack of compassion for others or lack of obedience in sharing the gospel?
- **HANDS:** Who needs a reminder of the good news of the gospel this week that you can share with?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

“As we worship we celebrate our salvation through Christ who will bring us to glory, we pray for that kingdom to come, we quicken our hope by praises and anthems that direct our thoughts to the next life, and through the ministry of the Word we build our faith in this eternal hope.”⁴

—Allen Ross