



50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 2: Days 51-100

Introduction:

Who is the Church?

Often, we view the church as something we attend or a place we go, rather than something we are. But from a biblical perspective, the church is not so much a particular place or event as it is a corporate identity. Indeed, the church is the redeemed family of God, among whom God is pleased to dwell (1 Tim 3:15); with whom the Son is pleased to be joined (Eph 1:13–14); and whom the Spirit is pleased to seal (Rev. 19:7–9). The word commonly translated "*church*" (*ekklesia*) is especially illustrative. It essentially means an "*assembly*" or "*congregation*" of people "*called out*" by God. As the church, we have been "*called out*" by God—out of our pitiful condition of spiritual death—through the redeeming work of Christ and the power of the Spirit. We have become God's people in a particular sense, fitted for a purpose that culminates not simply in our personal salvation but also in our consistent, corporate adoration of the triune God.

The church's transcendent purpose surpasses the closest of human relationships. Even in the most intimate and stable of bonds we have here on earth, such as with friends or family, the unity we find can disappoint us because it is ultimately dependent on the integrity of fallen people. A distinguishing feature of the church is that the strength of its relationships is not contingent on the merits of its members but on the transcendent value and unifying power of its head, Jesus Christ (Col 1:18). Because the church's source of unity transcends itself, the acceptance and sense of belonging its members experience are reliable and unwavering.

The church completely satisfies these most fundamental human longings because her acceptance and belonging are grounded not in human performance but in divine perfection. Our appreciation of who we are as the church deepens further when we understand why it became such an integral part of God's plan in the first place. Before creation, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoyed perfect love and fellowship with one another. So great was this love that the Father promised the Son the gift of a redeemed family as a bride that would reflect Him. The Son reciprocated His love by purchasing and redeeming this people, and the Spirit sealed the church for its final and consummate union with Jesus Christ. When we see that, as God's people, we have been chosen before time even began, we are compelled to willingly partake in His beautiful design of the church. Our corporate identity as Christians, united as a spiritual family, aspires to finally

unite with our Lord Jesus Christ. As we await that final day, we commit ourselves to Christ as our head and, naturally, to His body, through which we are made to be more like Him.

Let's pray.

Lord, give us a love for Your church—this wonderful love gift that You're giving to the Son, who in turn will give it back to You. May we love it because it's Yours. May we love it because of the price paid by our dear Savior, who was treated as if He had committed every sin committed by every person who would ever believe, in order that we might be treated as if we committed every righteous deed Christ Himself has ever done. Such condescension for unworthy sinners is beyond our comprehension, but we rejoice in the preciousness of the church that You would do this for us. To that end, we pray, Lord, that You might be glorified in Your church, of which You are so worthy. And we pray in Jesus' precious and wonderful name, Amen.

The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul—(Servant of God)

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How to Use This eBook:

Simply read one message each morning. *(For a further understanding of the message content and context, click on the provided web link at the end of each message.)*

Starting each morning in this way is how you *"walk and talk with God in the cool of the day"* (Genesis 3:8), just like Adam and Eve did in the garden.

This process yields many benefits:

1. The early morning Bible study will be your spiritual breakfast (manna), which will nourish your soul throughout the day.
2. The early morning Bible study will fill your Holy Spirit's sails and propel your spiritual ship in the right direction throughout the day.
3. The early morning Bible study is the method that God uses to speak to you personally as the Word comes down through the Bible study.
4. Since prayer is the method that man uses to communicate with God by sending up his thoughts and concerns, the early morning Bible study sermon will put you in prayer mode throughout the entire day.
5. The early morning Bible study will produce many questions but will also provide all the answers. *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you."* Matthew 7:7.
6. The early morning Bible study is a demonstration of honoring and worshiping God.
7. Each Bible study guarantees your transformation into a more spiritually mature Christian through the renewal of your mind (Romans 12:2).
8. By following this process each morning, you will not only hear God speak directly to your heart through these messages, but you will soon become a mature, cast-iron soldier, saint, servant, and son or daughter of the Most High God.

Additional Notes:

1. It is recommended to share one message each day with your family, perhaps during mealtime.
2. To maximize concentration while listening to the audio files, it is helpful to read along with the audio transcript.
3. It is also beneficial to cut and paste transcript texts that are important to you while listening and then re-read those texts in the evening.
4. Please share this eBook with others; however, altering this content in any way is not permitted.

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Day 51

A Modern Parable

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves, they went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost. This wonderful little life-saving station saved many lives and gained renowned status. Some of the saved lives, as well as others in the surrounding area, expressed a desire to associate with the station and contribute their time, money, and effort to support its work. Thus, they purchased new boats, trained new crews, and saw the small life-saving station flourish. Some of the members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They believed that they should provide a slightly more comfortable place as the first refuge for those rescued from the sea. So, they replaced the emergency cots and beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building. Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they decorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely because they used it as sort of a club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do the work. At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as they were unpleasant and a hindrance to normal social life. Some members, who insisted on lifesaving as their primary purpose, pointed out that they were still known as a lifesaving station. They were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast, which they did. As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that occurred in the old one. It transformed into a club, leading to the founding of yet another life-saving station. History continued to repeat itself. And if you visit that coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown. This is a parable about the church. Where has the passion for life-saving gone? It is the passion for holiness and the desire for lost people to come to Christ that ignites the church and makes it powerful. When the church is preoccupied with its comfort, something goes wrong. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-6\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Passion for the Lost** – [TOC](#)

Day 52

The Duty of Reminding

The Apostle Peter understood the duty of ministry. Peter articulates it in 2 Peter 1:13: *"I consider it right as long as I am alive to stir you up by way of reminder."* To successfully withstand the demonic, seducing spirits' onslaught of demon doctrine through hypocritical, lying, and false teachers, we must possess knowledge. We must know what we believe. We must know our spiritual condition. To know our salvation, our Scripture, and our sanctification is to insulate us against the onslaught of false teachers and their false doctrine. You gain assurance of salvation

by adding to your faith moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. When these qualities are present and growing, you will remember your spiritual condition and your salvation. Peter wanted to leave a legacy. He wanted to leave a final will and testament to remind people of the greatness of salvation and the blessedness of assurance, as well as to make sure that false teachers and false doctrine didn't steal any of that away. How did he do that? By way of reminder, the teacher never holds back the truth because it is known. The truth bears repetition. That's how you build a wall of strength with blocks. Even though your conscious mind says I've heard that before, somehow it stacks another brick upon your subconscious mind when you hear it again. You build a strong and fortified foundation through repetition. It's almost as if the first time you hear a truth, it sets the nail in the wood, and the second, third, and fourth times you hear it are the hammer blows that drive it deep. Believers can become lazy, sleepy, and drowsy, failing to be alert and clear-minded. So what does it mean to "*stir you up*"? It means to awaken you from sleep, awaken you from laziness, and awaken you from your lethargy. There's a sense in which every preacher and teacher knows that his responsibility is to stimulate you and awaken you from your lethargy, indifference, laziness, apathy, and spiritual drowsiness. It's so tragic when people forget. And knowing the truth is no protection against forgetting, so we remind you over and over. That is the duty of the ministry. Repent and believe! GTY.org (61-13) – A Ready Reminder – [TOC](#)

Day 53

Sight is the Issue

Light and darkness are the most dominant and consistent features of life in this world. The world at all times is dominated both by light on one half and darkness on the other. This universal experience provides biblical writers, as well as the Lord Himself, with wonderful analogies for teaching spiritual truth. Now, the simple idea is this: light reveals and darkness conceals. That is why blindness is so limiting. Light is everywhere, yet a blind person can't perceive it. All that light, all that disclosure, all that revelation—it's useless. And even though there is gospel light, people can't see it because they don't have spiritual sight. The simple truth is this: gospel light is everywhere, but spiritually blind people can't see it. It was never a light issue. It was always a spiritual sight issue. And it's the same today. Why? Because "*faith comes by hearing the message about Christ.*" *Romans 10:17*. There's plenty of light, but the issue is sight. When God brings a Christian into spiritual life, He turns on His light, and we can see it. We wouldn't understand anything if God didn't turn on His light. We wouldn't understand God; we wouldn't understand anything about Him; we wouldn't understand His nature, His character, or His purposes; we wouldn't understand the plan of salvation unless God turned the light on. And the Bible is the light: Psalm 119:105 says, "*Thy Word is a light,*" a lamp. And there was also the light in person—God in human flesh. As 2 Corinthians 4:6 puts it, "*the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.*" God's light shined through Jesus, revealing everything that was necessary. Jesus came and made everything clear—everything about sin, righteousness, judgment, the kingdom, salvation, true holiness, and true religion. Christ was the blazing light of God's glory. In Jesus, God

turned on the light. During the three years of Jesus' ministry, light permeated every aspect of their lives. It was not an issue of light. It was an issue of sight. Why can only a few see? Because *"men love darkness rather than light because they cherish their sins."* *John 3:19*. Have you been granted spiritual sight? *"Ask, and you shall receive."* *Matt 7:7*. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(42-163\)](#) – **A Question of Sight** – [TOC](#)

Day 54

A Prayer for Forgiveness

Father, if there is anything in my heart that could be seen as an unforgiving attitude toward anyone, please forgive me and remove it, for I know that You forbid an unforgiving heart as much as You forbid murder. I know that You, though most sinned against, forgive me and require that I forgive the sinner who is less holy. We also know, Lord, that a lack of forgiveness forfeits fellowship and communion with You, leaving my own sins unforgiven. A lack of forgiveness robs me of the love of other Christians and brings me under chastening. And then, I know, frighteningly, that a lack of forgiveness takes the sword out of Your hand, makes me blasphemously claim to be a better judge, makes me unfit for worship, and causes me to fall victim to temptation. Lord, may I not be unforgiving, but may I be like Paul, who was forgiving like Christ and sought that others should be the same. And thus, may I know Your blessing and the joy that comes to obedient believers for my Savior's sake? Thank you, Father, for this tremendous lesson in forgiveness. Amen. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(57-3\)](#) – **The Actions of One Who Forgives** – [TOC](#)

Day 55

The Bible and Science: The Second Law of Thermodynamics

The Law of Increasing Disorder is a well-known scientific principle. It states that everything in the universe is running down, disintegrating, and will eventually come up dead. Science cannot explain this law, and they have no idea why everything is decreasing into disorder and running down, heading toward deadness. The Bible is the only place where you can go for an explanation, and the explanation is the little three-letter word, sin. The Bible explains why: Romans 8 says, *"The whole creation is groaning as in the pains of childbirth, waiting for the curse to be reversed."* The Bible is accurate in everything it talks about. It says, *"He hangs the earth on nothing."* *Job 26:7*. Whether you're talking about geology, geodesy, meteorology, physiology, biology, anthropology, astronomy, hydrology, etc., when the Bible speaks, it is accurate. The Law of Increasing Disorder is also known in science as the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In the Bible, it is known as the curse of the fall, and there is only one way for you to reverse it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(55-17\)](#) – **Our God-Breathed Bible** – [TOC](#)

Day 56

Understanding Divine Priority

Who's going to take care of you? God will. If you respond to the truth and enter God's kingdom, then you become His to care for. What's the secret? Trusting God. Your God promises to sustain you to the end of His purpose. *"My God shall supply all your needs."* Phil 4:19. Life comes from God. He gives it. He sustains it. If He gave you life, He will sustain it, and He will provide everything you need if you continue to honor Him. He will take care of you until He completes His work for you. God's going to take care of His own children. So why worry about life's necessities? Worry is a failure to understand divine priority. What is the divine priority? You are here as God's child to fulfill a divine purpose, and He will sustain you until that end. However, the people who are not in God's family come and go and live and die with no contribution to the divine kingdom, so they are not a divine priority. However, those who are His fulfill a divine purpose, and He makes them a divine priority. Do you trust God? If you come into His kingdom, you can trust God to meet your needs. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-172\)](http://GTY.org) – **Anxiety-Free Living, Part 1** – [TOC](#)

Day 57

Saved From Perishing

Does salvation require hearing and believing the gospel? What does the Bible say about this? It says that you can't come to know God through human wisdom. *"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing."* 1 Cor 1:18. These perishing people cannot come to know God. Even the most intelligent of them, the most erudite, the most educated, the most elite, and the wisest of the wise, individually and collectively, can't come to know God. It is impossible. Everybody on the planet is in one of those categories. You're either in the group that is perishing or the group that is being saved. If you're in the group that is being saved, then when the word of the cross comes to you, it is the power of God—the *"word of the cross,"* meaning the gospel. If you're in the category of those who are perishing, when the word of the cross comes to you, it is foolishness, and it is rejected as such. 1 Cor 1:21 says, *"In the wisdom of God"*—that is, God determined by His own wisdom not to save men through their own intellects—however, *"God was well-pleased, through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."* Believers are the ones who receive salvation. Apart from that, there is no salvation. So, those who are perishing cannot, through their own wisdom, come to know God. Even if you bring the truth of God to a man who's perishing, to a man who is in his natural condition, he's not going to be able to accept it. Why? 1 Cor 2:14 says, *"A natural man doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God; they're foolishness to him; he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined,"* and he is spiritually dead. How can we alter this state? The only way that you can know the truth—the only way you can know God—is by the Spirit of God revealing it to you. The perishing person is spiritually dead unless the Holy Spirit awakens him and gives him life through

the gospel—brings him to life by the Word of Truth. That's the Holy Scripture; the work of the Holy Spirit gives us the revelation of the gospel that saves. Therefore, the perishing will not independently acquire knowledge of God through human reason, and they will even reject the gospel's revelation upon hearing it, unless the Spirit of God transforms them from the category of the perishing to the category of the saved. True Christians have always believed that rescue from hell comes only to those who hear, understand, believe the gospel, and embrace it fully. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-377\)](http://GTY.org) – **Saved by What?** – [TOC](#)

Day 58

Stop Being Afraid

Our Lord Jesus told people they should not be anxious, they should not worry, and they should not be afraid. Anxiety-free living, worry-free living, and fear-free living are part of what the Lord offered those who put their trust in Him. The Lord offers not only heavenly bliss, heavenly peace, and heavenly joy, but also present-day peace and joy. Scripture says, *"Your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."* He will give you whatever you need to sustain your life in this world, and He will give you all that you need to sustain your life in His kingdom. Worry, then, is unnecessary. Worry is really the result of two things: ignorance and/or unbelief. There are people who worry not because they don't know what God has promised but because they don't believe what God has promised. God's purpose in giving you life—God's purpose in giving you a body—is not material, not physical, and not earthly. It is immaterial, spiritual, and heavenly. We were created for His glory. Our purpose is to serve His glory, honor Him, draw attention to Him, proclaim the gospel, and embody Christ and the power of the Spirit in the world. And as long as that is the divine priority—God's priority and purpose for us—then He will sustain us to the end of His purpose. What is your responsibility? Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-173\)](http://GTY.org) – **Anxiety-Free Living, Part 2** – [TOC](#)

Day 59

Identifying a False Religion

Test the spirits. *"Spirits,"* meaning persons. Whether they are humans or angels, we test what we're hearing. It is critical because Satan and demons exist, and they operate a kingdom of lies that dominates the world. We shouldn't be surprised that Satan operates 99 percent of the time in false religion, lies, and deception. This is what we're engaged in—a spiritual war. It's a battle for how people think. It's a battle for the mind. Ours is a war for the mind. Systems that oppose God and Christ fortify individuals minds, and they find themselves imprisoned there. Eventually, they find themselves entombed there. What is our responsibility? Our responsibility is to smash these ideologies and crush these fortifications. And to take every thought captive to the

obedience of Christ. This is a battle for how people think. It's a truth war and a spiritual war. Part of being able to fight that war is to test the spirits. We can't go blithely along accepting anything and everything that people affirm or avow. It is the responsibility of every pastor, teacher, preacher, and Christian to examine all claims and test all people and prophecies. We examine everything to see what is true. It's a long war on the truth, and it rages all the time, and the true people of God have always had to battle the false prophets and the liars. So, what are the tests? Here's one: 2 John 4:2, *"By this, you know the Spirit of God."* Here's how you know: *"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God."* The first test is a Christological one. The first test has to do with the person of Jesus Christ. Every spirit that confesses Christ is from God. Any spirit that does not confess Christ is not of God. It all starts with Christology. False religions and heretical Christian cults all have an aberrant Christology and a corrupted Christianity. The Holy Spirit, however, does not. The Holy Spirit has an accurate view of Christ, always truthfully presenting the glory of the Son. Any Holy Spirit-filled preacher will be Christ-dominated and present Him in an accurate, exalting, and truthful way. Jesus is God, and any religion that denies that He is God is false. How do we tell the Spirit of Truth from the Spirit of error? Because the Spirit of Truth is supported by Scripture, according to the Bible, that's how we know. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM13-6\)](http://GTY.org) – **Testing the Spirits** – [TOC](#)

Day 60

How are Men to Act?

Godly men don't give in to fear, pressure, or intimidation, and they don't give in to temptation. They don't seek the easy way. They will take the pain, they will invite the risk, they will confront the challenge, and they will not bow to the pressure to compromise the commandments of God. The strength of a man is that he lives on principle, that he lives on conviction, that he has the courage of those convictions, stands strong against everything that comes at those convictions, and bravely faces the challenges in a fortified way. Manly fortitude means contending with difficulty, facing every enemy, meeting the enemy head-on, bearing the pain, maintaining self-discipline, upholding truth, and pressing on to the goal. That's what defines a man. How do you live like that? You will be able to if you're saturated by the Word of God and empowered by the Spirit of God. This is the mark of a man. It takes a father like that to raise a son like that. Spiritual men are courageous, strong, principled, uncompromising, and bold. This is God's role for men to play in a society, but it is also God's role for the men to play who are the leaders of His church. Being a good father means showing their children what an uncompromising, courageous, godly life looks like. When children grow up in a home where the man secures the woman and the children, there is peace. Our world needs a generation of men who act like men for Christ's sake. Because raising up a generation of strong, godly, and courageous men who follow Christ is the only hope. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-82\)](http://GTY.org) – **Act Like Men** – [TOC](#)

Day 61

What is Baptism?

The Lord has left only two ordinances for the church: the Lord's Table and baptism. Jesus said, *"Go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them."* *Matt 28:19*. He gave a command to the church to baptize. So, as a church, we are under Christ's commanding words to baptize. We are under the commanding word of the Holy Spirit as individuals to be baptized, and we follow in the line of the pattern and example established on the day the church was born, when every believer was immediately baptized. What is baptism? It is a ceremony that involves immersing, dunking, or submerging a person in water. That's the physical act of baptism. Baptism always means immersing, submerging, or dunking into water. Water immersion is commanded by every believer, and it is very important not only for its own sake—because it demonstrates one's obedient heart—but also because of the picture that it presents. Baptism is a teaching aid. Baptism is an object lesson. Baptism is a physical analogy of a profound spiritual reality, and any student of Scripture knows that God likes to teach with symbols, pictures, illustrations, parables, and analogies. And the Lord only left us with two: the Lord's Table and baptism. They must be His two most important pictures. The Lord's Table is a physical picture of the death and sacrifice of Christ, and baptism is a physical picture of the death and burial of the new birth that occurs when one puts his faith in the Savior. It is an object lesson. It is a visual representation of a spiritual reality. That is what baptism entails. So the major note in this baptism ceremony was an admission of sinfulness at the nature level, deep down, and at the behavior level in all the actions of life, and the desperate need to die to all of that and rise in a new family with a new relationship to the true God. So that's where immersion got started, and it symbolizes the death of the old and a new life. All those who accepted John the Baptist's baptism in the Jordan River confessed their sinfulness, acknowledged their deservingness of death and burial, and pledged to embrace a new life, with the baptism symbolizing death, burial, and resurrection. The baptism signified a pivotal moment for a sinful individual, eager to prepare for his Messiah and to unite with the other baptized individuals as a repentant community, filled with forgiveness and prepared to embrace the Savior. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-57\)](http://GTY.org) – [Understanding Baptism – TOC](#)

Day 62

The Origin of Sin

Scripture tells us that sin entered the world through one man. *"As by one man, sin entered into the world."* *Romans 5:12*. Now consider that carefully. It does not say that Adam originated sin. Prior to Adam, sin had already originated. For the Bible says, *"The devil sins from the beginning."* *1 John 3:8*. Now, I don't know what the beginning was, but it was certainly the beginning of his sin. And it predates Adam. So, Adam didn't originate sin; he learned it from the one who originated it, the devil. He merely brought it into the human realm. That's why it says that by one man, sin entered not into existence but into the cosmos, into the human system, into mankind.

Adam's role was to serve as an introduction. He was acting as an agent for Satan. Satan made the product; Adam just introduced it into the marketplace. First John 3:8 says, *"The one who does sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. The Son of God was manifested for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."* Adam was merely a pawn in the devil's attack on God. Adam and Eve, like Satan, wanted to be like God. And because of their disobedience, God cursed them individually, as well as their marriage. And that's the fall. What was the result? Every human being born since then has inherited the curse of that sin, death. The good news? There is a cure! Repent and believe! GTY.org (45-43) – **Adam and the Reign of Death** – [TOC](#)

Day 63

Our Conscience is a Gift from God

What is our conscience, and how does it function? In 1984, an Avianca jet crashed in Spain. Investigators studying the accident made an eerie discovery. The Black Box in the cockpit, where they record the dialogue of the pilots and the controllers, revealed that several minutes before the fatal impact, a shrill computerized synthesized voice from the plane's automatic warning system told the crew repeatedly in English, *"Pull up, pull up, pull up."* The pilot inexplicably snapped back, *"Shut up, Gringo,"* and switched the system off. Minutes later, the plane smashed into the side of a mountain, and everyone died. That's a perfect parable of the way modern people treat the warning messages of their conscience. The conscience is there by God's design, built into the fabric of every human being as a warning system. The wisdom of our age says that guilt feelings are almost always erroneous and harmful, and we really need to switch them off. Is that good advice? We need to find that out. The question is, what is the conscience, and how does it operate? Well, as I said, it is our internal warning system. How are we going to respond to it? What role does it play in a Christian's life? It is a tremendous gift from God, far from being a defect or some kind of disorder that we are to turn off. It is the automatic warning system that tells us, *"Pull up, pull up, pull up before you crash and burn."* God designed the conscience to be the very framework of the human soul. The conscience is the ability to sense in your own heart whether there is sin, whether there is something wrong, and whether there is guilt and shame. That is a great gift from God. Like the gift of pain, which warns you that you are hurting your body so you don't kill yourself, the gift of conscience warns you that you are killing your soul. The conscience is the soul's reflection on itself. Conscience either affirms that you're doing right or it accuses and warns that you're doing wrong. It is not infallible; it is not God's voice; it is not God's moral law. It will hold you to your highest perceived standard. Therefore, if you want to get the most out of your conscience, you have to inform it at the highest level, which means you submit yourself to the Word of God. And as you fill your life with the Word of God, the standard continues to rise. Whatever moral law you know innately by virtue of your humanity is only a start. Repent and believe! GTY.org (47-5) – **The Soul's Warning System** – [TOC](#)

Day 64

Understanding Substitution

You remember Moses saying, *"Let my people go,"* and Pharaoh refused to do that, so God unleashed on Egypt plague after plague, a series of ten plagues culminating in the final plague, which was the supernatural execution of the firstborn in every family, who was the heir to everything the family possessed, the favored child. The death angel was going to travel through Egypt and kill the firstborn child in every house. God instructed the Jews to spare the firstborn child from this divine assassin by killing a lamb without any blemish, offering it as a sacrifice to the Lord, and splattering its blood around the door at the top and on the sides. This way, the death angel could see the blood and know that they had obeyed God by offering a sacrifice. Now follow the thought. The lamb's life was given in place of the life of the firstborn. The lamb died as a substitute. It was a substitutionary death that paid the price God required and rescued the firstborn from death. The lamb's bloody death led to the ransoming of the firstborn. The blood then redeemed the family from divine judgment. It was a lamb's death that paid the price to satisfy God, and the angel passed by. All of that imagery finds its way to the cross. Christ, the Lamb of God, redeems us by taking away the sin of the world. Death was the ransom price that God required. Christ was the Lamb who died to pay the ransom price; it was the Lamb's death for our lives. He died so that the death angel might pass us by. To understand the Christian faith, then, is to understand redemption, ransom, and substitutionary death. Christ died for all who believe in Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-200\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Basics of Redemption** – [TOC](#)

Day 65

A Divine Miracle

Two thousand years ago, God entered this world as a human being. The Deity put on the robe of humanity. The heavenly Son became an earthly baby. On a night familiar to us, emblazoned by a bright and magnificent star, a child was born not like any other child before or since: the God-Man. This single event was so cataclysmic that it became history's apex and established the calendar. Everything before this event is B.C. (before Christ), and everything after is Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. This was the moment when redemptive history reached its pinnacle and the Son of God, the Savior of the world, was born. Luke recounts for us the story of the Savior's conception and the Savior's birth with compelling, concise, and rich detail—a record of a virgin conceiving a child—a real incarnation where God is born through a human. This is the virgin conception that led to the virgin birth, which is the foundation of the gospel. A true incarnation of God in flesh necessitates a virgin conception. This is foundational and critical to our faith. If Jesus had a human mother and a human father, he would be a man, not God. And if He is a man and not God, then He is not the Savior; there is no salvation, and there is no good news. Here are the divine facts: Gabriel was the divine messenger, Mary was the divine choice, *"The Lord is with you"* is the divine blessing, and Jesus was the divine child. No one had seen an angel, heard a

word from God, or experienced a miracle in centuries. Then came the divine miracle. All of a sudden, it all happens. God speaks through an angel about a miracle. The Holy Spirit, who was the original agent of creation, will again become an agent of creation, this time in the womb of this young girl. God Himself, the sovereign Creator of the universe, will come to surround, overshadow, and influence Mary's womb with creative power. A divine influence transforms Mary's body. The child that is going to be born will be unlike any other human in that this child will be holy. The point is that He was sinless, because that's how God created him—sinless from conception. And because God himself created this child in Mary's womb, this holy offspring is the Son of God. Jesus Christ was the exact duplication of God's nature, and therefore, he is God's Son. This is essential to the entire Christian faith. God created this sinless, holy, and divine child in a human womb. In human form, God's Son is God Himself. By conception and miraculous birth, Jesus was the Son of God. God, Jesus himself, demons, Satan, and the apostles repeatedly affirm Jesus as the Son of God. That was God's plan. His Son of God will be born by an act of divine creation. Repent and believe! GTY.org (42-12) – **The Virgin Birth: A Divine Miracle** – [TOC](#)

Day 66

Point of No Return?

If you disobey God, you'll never be blessed. That's true individually, and, therefore, it's true collectively. It is pointless, really, no matter how well-intentioned, to keep on saying "*God bless America*" when it is crystal clear that America is not interested in meeting the conditions of that blessing. Two things have to happen for God to bless America. One, we have to return to God; and two, we have to return to guilt. We have to return to a true understanding of God and ourselves. We have to look up to God and His truth; we have to look into our fallenness, our wretchedness, and our sinfulness. While we're seeing the truth of God's morality, we also have to see the truth of our immorality. You want a blessing? Then you have to revert to the holy standard. If you turn from the law of God, I guarantee you will not have success. You will not have prosperity. You will not enjoy safety, protection, or wellbeing. If America wants success, prosperity, wellbeing, safety, protection, and all of these things, then the standard is established. Go back to the law of God and meet the God of the law. This is a serious situation because we have turned so seriously against God that we are far, far away from a return. You want to put yourself in the worst possible condition? Suppress this truth. You want to put yourself in the best possible condition? Repent and believe! GTY.org (80-245) – **Can God Bless America?** – [TOC](#)

Day 67

Two Kinds of People

According to Scripture, there are only two kinds of people in the world. The wise and the foolish. The world is full of fools, and the wise are sprinkled among them. Who are the fools? Everyone who doesn't know God. The wise are everyone who does. You're talking about the most defining reality that can be declared about those who know God. They are wise. If you're a fool, you may not be as foolish as some other fools, but you're a fool. If you're wise, you may not be as wise as some other wise people, but you're wise. That's the dividing reality. It's one thing to have intelligence; that's a definable human characteristic. It's another thing to have knowledge; that's information; but it's quite another to take that intelligence, put it together with the knowledge, and come up with wisdom. We live in a world of fools. That's a characterization of the nations of the world. Their minds are empty. Their understanding has darkened. They are excluded from the life of God, which means they're dead in trespasses and sins. They're ignorant, and the ignorance is deep in them. It's a part of the hardness of their hearts. Their callousness leads them to indulge in all forms of sensuality and impurities, and they do so with a sense of greed. They can't sin fast enough or full enough to satisfy their own lustful greed. So what you have in a world of fools with exploding knowledge is just an endless new way to express their darkened understanding. That's where their folly begins: *"A fool says in his heart, there is no God."* *Psalm 14:1*. That is to say, they do not believe in the true and living God. They might come up with another deity, as they do almost universally. That is the fundamental definition of a fool: someone who rejects the true, living, and only God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But now that they've eliminated the true God, who becomes God? They do. Therefore, the first characteristic of fools is their rejection of God. The second characteristic of fools is that they worship themselves. They become the source and standard of truth—the standard of what is right and what is wrong. This is idolatry, or self-worship, but it is the most universal and common characteristic of fools. Don't be a fool. Repent and believe! GTY.org (GTY171) – **Walking Wisely in a Foolish World** – [TOC](#)

Day 68

Is Moral Change Enough?

The mandate for the Christian in the world is the ministry of reconciliation to God through Christ, which brings about righteousness, transformation, and a new creation. However, some Christians have the idea that trying to moralize our country is a noble effort. But that will only superficially sanitize America. And I will admit that, in some ways, a more moral society would make life easier. But how do you bring that about? Not through politics. We are not a kingdom of politicians; we are a kingdom of priests. And what is a priest? He's a reconciler. He's a bridge between men and God. We bring people to God through Christ. The biblical message does not divide humanity into moral and immoral, good and bad, or virtuous and wicked. The Bible's message is that all have sinned and come short of God's glory, and there is no division. In God's eyes, we are all immoral,

bad, and wicked. It's only a question of degree, kind, or manifestation. Whatever somebody's external degree of morality might be, all are condemned sinners headed to Hell. You might be the most moral Pharisee in Israel. You might be the most moral rabbi. You might be the most moral, self-righteous, clean-living Mormon, and you're going to hell with the prostitutes unless you've been reconciled to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Once you've found reconciliation with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, you transform into a new creation, replacing your old behaviors with new ones. That's the only real change that God will bless. So, if we want change, morality saves no one. Morality does not entitle one to God's blessing. The only genuine change that ever produces a blessing is reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-257\)](#) – **The Deadly Dangers of Moralism** – [TOC](#)

Day 69

Delivered From Above

Jesus said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* *John 3:3*. Jesus articulated that, like infants, sinners need to be born again or delivered into spiritual life in order to enter heaven. Therefore, proclaiming the new birth and being born again is the church's top priority and most critical responsibility. But almost no one seems to understand what our Lord is saying. The concept of being born again is so straightforward that it should never be confusing. He simply gave us an earthly illustration. If you can't get the illustration that in order to enter the kingdom, you must be born again, you'll never understand the heavenly reality of the new birth. So you must understand the heavenly reality of the new birth, because it is a foundational truth of salvation. Since we are all born spiritually dead, the priority is to be born again, or delivered into spiritual life, and become a spiritual infant. But how? *"You must be born again"* is more accurately translated: *"You must be born from above."* The analogy is this: What role did you play in your physical birth? That's absurdity because you played no role in your physical birth. That is exactly the reason why our Lord uses this analogy. To assume that you have anything to do with your physical birth is an insane idea. To assume that you have anything to do with your spiritual birth is equally insane. It's absurd. That's why our Lord chose this analogy, because it's so clear. To be born again, delivered, or born from above is a task in which you play no role. Your physical birth happened to you, and you had no part in it. And the same is true of spiritual birth. The message of our Lord here is that it's a work of God, and it's totally a work of God, which immediately obliterates all works of righteousness—all religion, all ceremony, all ritual, all sacraments—as having any contribution to bringing about spiritual life. It is not something you and God do together. It is God alone. You're not going to enter the kingdom of God because you try harder to be a better person, or more religious, or more moral, or more philanthropic, or more virtuous. That is exactly the point the Lord is making with this simple earthly analogy that is foundational to salvation. Any obstetrician can birth or deliver you into the physical world. But only God can birth or deliver you into the spiritual world. You contribute to neither. God alone is the source of spiritual life, which is what it means to be born again. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-97\)](#) – **You Must Be Born Again** – [TOC](#)

Day 70

God's Way of Reconciliation

"God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Gen 1:31. A perfect creation, including man. There's no sin. Adam and Eve live in the garden, in God's fellowship. It is a full, blessed, pure, and righteous fellowship. There's no alienation, no separation, no need for a religion, and no need to find a way to reconcile with God. God remains unalienated; the sinner has not yet committed a sin. Then Satan finds Eve; Eve finds Adam; they disobey God, and the fall occurs. Now sin has entered the world. Immediately, there is alienation and separation from God. We have gone from communion to alienation, from fellowship to separation. Sin has separated man from God. Now we have the need for reconciliation. What did Adam and Eve do? *"They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." Gen 3:7.* This is the start of a false religion. Men are finding a way to cover their own sin. But it does not salve their guilty conscience, so they hide from God. Their relationship to God has dramatically changed, and that is the relationship that every human being has had since. False religion has always said, *"Make something to cover yourselves and hide."* But it doesn't work. Man-made coverings, such as rituals and ceremonies, are useless: they do not cover his shame, they do not hide him from God, and they do not remove him from divine judgment. So, *"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." Gen 3:21.* Here is the first act of true religion. If the sinner is to have a covering for sin, it has to come from God, and it has to come by death. This is the first death since creation began, and God is the killer. The Christian doctrine of substitutionary death introduces itself at the very beginning, in the garden itself. Where an innocent animal gives its life to provide cover for sinners who cannot cover themselves. So, in the garden, you have the beginning of false religion—the covering for sin that Adam and Eve made. And the beginning of true religion, which is the covering for sin that only God can make through death. That's what the sacrificial system communicated to Adam and Eve and to us. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-9\)](http://GTY.org)
– **The Danger of Adding to the Gospel** – [TOC](#)

Day 71

Why We Come to the Lord's Table

At the beginning and end of Jesus's ministry, He did two powerful miracles, essentially the same thing: at Passover, He threw tens of thousands of people out of the temple. Those were the miracles of holy anger. Psalm 69:9 says, *"Zeal for Your house will consume me."* There was no glory for God, and Jesus essentially declared the entire event irreverent and blasphemous. When you feel the pain of God's dishonor, it's a sign of zeal for His house. But there's no physical temple anymore, so what does that mean to us? A spiritual temple is present. We are the Temple. 1 Peter 4:17 says, *"For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God, and it begins with us first."* The judgment begins at God's house. We are the Temple of the living God; He indwells His church. And it is time for judgment to begin here, and this is where we come to grips with it, right

at the Lord's table. That's a frightening thing if you come to this table in an unworthy manner, that is, celebrating the death of Christ for sin while holding on to sin. If you come in a hypocritical manner, you're guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:31 says, *"If we judge ourselves rightly, we will not be judged."* So judgment begins in the church, in the household of God, and here is where it starts. If we judge ourselves, we won't be judged. That's what it's saying. The Lord's Table then becomes the point of our initial self-judgment. When we are judged, Paul says, we are disciplined by the Lord, not condemned by the world. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. But judgment begins here so that we don't become disciplined by the Lord. This is where the judgment begins. If we examine ourselves and come in a worthy manner, then there's no further judgment—that judgment stands as the final judgment. If we don't judge ourselves rightly, discern our condition, and come in a pure way, then we are exposed to the judgment of God in forms of discipline. And that's why we come to the Lord's Table. We come to be judged if we do not judge ourselves. Therefore, when you come to this table, you are saying to the Lord, *"I'm exposed at this point to Your judgment if I don't examine my own heart and honestly confess my own sin."* What do you think would happen if the Lord showed up today? Would He do something like He did then? I think there might be many churches where He would. He is here, and He will judge those who do not examine themselves and repent. Therefore, we invite you to do so. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-9\)](http://GTY.org) – **Zeal for My Father's House** – [TOC](#)

Day 72

Where Salvation Begins

Your desire to obtain what you want should not motivate you to come to Christ. Your desire to fulfill God's commands is what motivates you. This is where salvation begins. What attracts people to the gospel—what draws people to Christ—is a desire to do God's will. You come to know the truth when God reveals it to you, and he reveals it to you only when you seek to do his will. This is how faith works. What is *"saving faith"*? It is the desire to trust Jesus Christ to do God's will. It requires believing. You turn away from yourself and towards God. Repentance (turning) is always the first step. God does not shed light on his truth unless a man is anxious to walk according to it. He doesn't grant an understanding of the truth until a man is willing to obey that truth. He has no time for false converts and hypocrites. That's a message to every person. There's no middle ground. You either embrace Jesus as your Savior and Lord or you don't. One way promises heaven, and the other promises hell. There's plenty of reason to believe, but that's where it has to start. There must be in your heart a desire to do the will of God. Stop doing your own will. Stop doing Satan's will. Stop doing the will of the world around you and follow the hunger that says, *"I want, more than anything, to do the will of God. I want God to be my master. I want Jesus Christ to be my Lord. I want to exchange the evil master of sin and the wretchedness of my own heart for a gracious, good master—a loving master who will lead me to blessing and eternal life."* When you want to do the will of God, then you will know the truth, which sets you free. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-41\)](http://GTY.org) – **Embracing the Claims of Christ** – [TOC](#)

Day 73

The Great Escape

There is an old-school preacher, and he speaks as boldly as ever today. Despite his global outreach and his ability to speak in various languages, he remains relatively unpopular. He visits the poor. He visits the rich. He preaches to people of all religions, as well as many of those of no religion. And his sermon's subject is always the same. It never changes. He is an eloquent preacher, and he is able to stir emotions in hearts that are not emotional. He is able to bring tears to eyes that seldom weep. His arguments are beyond refutation. There is no heart that remains untouched and unmoved by the force of his appeals. This preacher shatters lives. This preacher disturbs the status quo. Most people hate him. Everybody listens to him. His name is Death. Every tombstone is his pulpit. Every newspaper prints his text. And one day, you will be the subject of his sermon; he will stand by your graveside and preach to others. Because for every living soul that comes into this world, there is a built-in little time fuse, and we all have one. When we are born, our time fuse ignites and starts burning. Some of us burn quickly, while others burn more slowly, but we all burn. Every birth signals the beginning of a countdown, and every countdown zeroes on an exit. As a result, life is just the process of dying. The day when the fuse burns out, the day when the hearse arrives, and somebody has reached zero hour. And then what? Is there any hope? Is there an escape from doom? Is there something that has power over death, or does it just grab and hold us? Is there an escape? Is death the final disaster? Has anyone conquered death? Is there any way to go through death and emerge on the other side? Is there any chance of beating it? Has anyone ever shown power over death? And if so, have they made it possible for me to have a victory? The answer to those questions lies in Jesus Christ's resurrection. In Revelation 1:18, Jesus Christ said, *"I am He who was dead and am alive forever more."* Jesus has beaten death, gone into the grave, and come out the other side. But has He made a way for me to do it? The answer is yes. Jesus beat death, making it possible for us to beat it and escape into an eternal, glorious life with Him. Jesus Christ turned death, the ultimate tragedy, into the ultimate triumph. And for anyone who knows and loves Jesus Christ and accepts His death and resurrection for themselves, that same triumph belongs to them. We don't fear death. Death, for us, will be an escape into the presence of Jesus Christ, the greatest possible joy we could imagine in the universe, because Christ made the way. He was the first, and we're following, as are all those who love Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1203\)](http://GTY.org) – **Abolishing Death: The Ultimate Triumph** – [TOC](#)

Day 74

God is in the Trouble

Jesus said, *"In this world, you will have trouble."* John 16:33. The Bible, however, always tells us that God is in the trouble. He's not just looking at the trouble; He's not just allowing the trouble; He is in the trouble. Some people want to purge God of responsibility for what goes wrong. That's not the right approach. God is the one who does things. Even calamity is done within the

framework of the Lord's will. But people want to exonerate God from trouble, as if somehow that made Him less than holy and pure, when the fact of the matter is that His holiness, His absolute purity, and His righteousness demand justice and judgement. The question is not, *"Why does God allow bad things to happen?"* The question is, *"Why doesn't God allow them to happen more often or even terminally?"* So you see calamity come to pass, and it comes to pass because the Lord commands it. Look, all of us are sinners, and we have no right to complain about the holiness of God. We can't complain; we are sinners. So why do bad things happen to good people? Because there are no good people? *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* Rom 3:23. Bad things will always happen because there are no good people; we are all sinners. God is far too complex for you, and He only lets you know what you need to know. That's what you need to know, and that's really all you need to know. What God wants you to know is that He is in charge of absolutely everything, at a complexity level that is so vastly beyond your comprehension that explaining it would be useless. But He wants you to know this: It's all according to His will that everything operates. That is to say, He is absolutely sovereign in the world. He is in control, and what He intends is exactly what comes to pass. And He wants you to know that if you belong to Him, it's all working together for your good. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-73\)](http://GTY.org) – **Finding Security in a Troubled World** – [TOC](#)

Day 75

Supernatural Hearing

Jesus says in Luke 8:18, *"Therefore, take care how you listen."* This is a warning from our Lord. He is saying, *"Be Careful How You Listen."* This is a constant theme in Scripture, which frequently warns us to listen when God speaks. How good are we at listening? What kind of listener are you? Jesus said, *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."* Luke 8:8. In other words, those of you who can listen rightly should listen because I'm going to explain to you a parable, and, interestingly enough, it's a parable about how you hear. Verse 11 says, *"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God."* Verse 12, *"The seed beside the road are those who have heard."* Verse 13, *"Those on the rocky soil are those who when they hear."* Verse 14 says, *"And the seed that fell among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard."* And verse 15, *"The seed in the good soil; these are the ones who have heard the Word in an honest and good heart."* The whole parable has been a story about how people hear. Some listen to it very superficially, as if it were hard ground. Some listen very emotionally and psychologically, like the rocky soil. Some hear very temporarily, like the weedy soil, and become distracted by other interests. Some hear with a good and honest heart; they hear savingly, and the Word takes root and produces a hundredfold. Then comes this statement on that parable. *"Be careful how you hear."* Don't hear it in a superficial, emotional, self-centered, or worldly fashion. The text's major premise, based on the parable of the soils, is to listen with a good and honest heart that responds appropriately to what the Word of God has to say. Take care of how you listen. Why? Because how you listen will reveal your spiritual condition. In this passage, we learn that you can make that assessment by discerning what type of listener you are. That will reveal to you whether you're the good soil or not. The way

people listen reveals their true salvation status, and how they hear is critical to discerning their own spiritual condition. How do you listen? There are four ways in which the good soil listens—four ways in which a true hearer hears. They listen evangelistically, authentically, fruitfully, and obediently. Bad soil or listeners don't. So, you can look at your life and know whether you're hearing it the way you should. Good listeners are given the supernatural ability to discern the meaning of God's Word. However, bad listeners are unwilling to listen, so Jesus warns them that at some point He will make them unable to ever understand God's Word. That is a divine judgment. We must do what God says: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him."* Luke 9:35. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-106\)](http://GTY.org) – **Be Careful How You Listen** – [TOC](#)

Day 76

The Battle Against God

The Supreme Court unleashed the first great terror attack on America when they legalized abortion. The legalization of same-sex marriage was the Supreme Court's second-greatest act of terror. The destruction of human life in the womb—the destruction of motherhood—and now the destruction of the family itself. No bomb, no explosion, no attack, and no physical assault on people can come close to that kind of terrorism. The people most responsible for protecting our country—those who must uphold the law—are terrorizing it. No human court has the authority to redefine morality. However, this human court has stated that murder is not murder, marriage is not marriage, and family is not family. They have usurped the authority that belongs only to God, who is the creator of life, marriage, and family. Any and all attempts to define morality differently than God has are a form of rebellion and blasphemy against God, His holy nature, His holy law, and His holy people. This nation, at its highest level, has taken a position against God. Such blasphemous rebellion is energized by the corruption of the collection of sinful hearts that make up this nation, or any nation. But behind that collection of sinful, corrupt human hearts—which make this kind of thing possible and acceptable—is the realm of Satan and demons. The Bible says Satan holds the whole world in his hands; the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one. Satan's enemies include God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the church, and the truth. Satan reigns over the world. He reigns over the world of sinners. He wields power in high places, too. He is the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, and he hates and seeks to destroy all that is light, all that is truth, all that is pure, all that is holy, all that is virtuous, and all that is good. I want to remind you that homosexuality, homosexual marriage, gender transition—these are not the real battlegrounds. The real battle ground is against God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the church, and the gospel. Any blasphemy against God comes from God haters, Christ haters, Bible haters, and gospel haters. And Satan, the arch-hater, fuels these blasphemies. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-425\)](http://GTY.org) – **We Will Not Bow** – [TOC](#)

Day 77

What is Sin?

1 John 2:15–17 says, *"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life—is not from the Father but from the world. And the world is passing away, as are its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever."* Diagnosing the heart of worldliness and all that is in the world, according to Scripture, the sum of it is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. None of that is from the Father; all of it is from the world. We don't mean the created physical world. We mean the system of sin or the system of evil; all that is in that anti-God, anti-Christ system is made up of a matrix of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. This is really diagnostic; it delves into the essence of sin, why we sin, and what compels us to sin. Sin, therefore, is a universal problem because there is not one good person. Sin has essentially generated the cosmic chaos that exists in the heavens between God and Satan, between holy angels and fallen angels, as well as between men and men and men and God. The chaos of heaven has become the chaos of the earth. The reality of sin has devastated all of creation. What is the impact on human life? Sin attacks every baby at the moment of conception, and it waits and lurks to embrace that baby fully when it leaves the protection of the mother's womb. Sin rules every heart; it intends to condemn every soul to hell. Sin turns beauty into ugliness, wholeness into deformity, joy into sorrow, and bliss into wretchedness. Understanding sin is critical so that we understand our need for salvation from sin. What is sin? 1 John 3:4 says, *"Sin is the transgression of the law."* That is to say, sin is any violation of God's law—any violation of God's perfect holy law. Sin is unrighteousness, while the law of God affirms what is righteous. Any act, any word, any thought, or any motive that violates God's holy, just, and perfect law constitutes sin. It's not a narrow category; it's a sweeping and broad one. And God has the right, as a holy God, to establish what pleases Him and what does not. He is the authority. He set the standards for man to live by. He established what is right and what is wrong, and anything that God says is wrong constitutes sin. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(62-17\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Cardiology of Worldliness](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 78

A Dramatic Change

The last book, chapter, and verse of the Old Testament end with a curse. *"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."* Mal 4:6. How interesting. The Old Testament ends with a curse. The New Testament begins with a blessing. Now that's a dramatic change. The last words of the man of God are *"a curse."* The first words of the Man of God, the living Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount are *"Blessed."* Cursing and blessing. The Old Testament: the law, Sinai, thunder, lightning, judgment, cursing. The New Testament: Zion, grace, peace, blessing. A dramatic change. What is the meaning of *"blessed"* in the New Testament? It means an inner peace, an inner bliss, an inner

happiness, and an inward joy that is neither produced by circumstance nor affected by circumstance. It is a state of happiness, a state of wellbeing, in which God desires his children to live. We find many times in the Bible the statement, "*Blessed be God.*" Whatever the definition of blessing is, it applies to God. If this blessedness is true of God and true of Christ, then the only people who will ever experience it are those who partake of God and partake of Christ. 2 Peter 1:4 says Christians are partakers of the divine nature. We can know the same bliss, the same inner state of contentment, and the same happiness deep down within us that is known by God and the Lord Jesus Christ themselves. Blessedness, then, is fundamentally an element of the character of God. And man will only know that element insofar as he is a partaker of the divine nature. The Sermon on the Mount has nothing to say and nothing to offer someone apart from faith in Jesus Christ. That's basic. But for those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, for those of us who, by faith in Christ, have become partakers of the divine nature, the same bliss, the same contentment, the same happiness, and the same sense of blessedness that is known by God of Himself and Christ of Himself can be known by us of ourselves. Once a person knows God through Christ, blessings become available to him or her. That's the kind of contentment God wants for us. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2197\)](http://GTY.org) – **Happiness Is...** – [TOC](#)

Day 79

The Power of False Religion

There is a story about a man whom Jesus healed. A man who was ill for 38 years by the pool of Bethesda. This, however, is not a story about healing; this is a story about false religion and about the power of false religion, the devastating grip of false religion, and the damning force that false religion exerts on people's minds and souls, even in the face of the truth. The remarkable emphasis of this story is found in its conclusion, "*The Jews were persecuting Jesus.*" The term "*Jew*" is a technical term for the religious leaders who were persecuting Jesus. This, then, is a miracle that initiates persecution, which continues all the way to Jesus' execution at Calvary. They have seen His deity on display. They heard His powerful words and saw His miraculous power. His words and works are a testimony to His deity—that He is the Messiah. To put it in the language of John, "*He is the Christ, the son of God, and we are to believe in His name, and by believing in His name, we have eternal life.*" But here we find that the Jews were persecuting Him. Jesus' works and words both created sensations across Israel. The people were excited by the sensational power of Jesus' words and works. And they marveled at everything He did, and everywhere He went, He was mobbed by crowds. However, it is motivated by curiosity, and it's superficial. Why? Because these people are captive to a false religious system that is immensely effective and powerful. It has been in place for generations, and it has a stranglehold over people. It is important for us to understand the power of false religion. We've all come across it in our endeavor to communicate the gospel to people who are Roman Catholics or Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses or in some other cult, or who are Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists, or whatever it is that they might be. We understand the massively captivating power of false religion, which captures the mind. And that's what we see in this incident. They had a decision to make: either

follow Jesus and forsake the Judaism system, or reject Jesus and remain loyal to the system. That system was devilish, damning, and deadly. They gathered to see His miracles. They were in awe of what He said. However, there was a general indifference to Him as the Messiah and the Son of God. Why? Because of the relentless negative influence of the religious leaders of Israel. This is the power of false religion. It has the power to capture the souls of sinners. Repent and believe!
[GTY.org \(43-25\)](#) – **The Damning Power of False Religion** – [TOC](#)

Day 80

If Christ Didn't Rise

The one thing we need most of all is a savior from sin. We're drowning people. We need someone to save us. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He failed. If He didn't go into combat with death and win, He failed. If He didn't go into combat with Satan, who according to Hebrews 2 *"has the power of death,"* and win, He failed. If He didn't go into hell, as Colossians tell us, announce His triumph, and come back out, He failed. According to the Bible, He conquered sin, Satan, and hell. If he didn't rise, He lost, sin won, Satan won, and hell is still holding a carnival over the victory. If there's no resurrection, sin is still on every man, and the only place we'll ever occupy through eternity is hell. You see, forgiveness is contingent upon the payment of the penalty. How do you know if He paid the penalty? With the approval of the Father. When the Father brought Christ out of the grave, that was the Father's way of approving His work. He was *"raised for our justification."* *Romans 4:25. "He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."* *Romans 6:4.* The Father was approving, the Father accepted His perfect work, and the Father lifted Him out of the grave. He could never save us unless He came out of the grave. His death reconciles us, and His life keeps us. If His death had the power to save us, then imagine how His life has the power to keep us. But there is no redemption, no salvation, and no preservation if Christ didn't rise. John 8:24 says, *"You shall die in your sins."* If Christ didn't rise, it's all over for us. This is the very antithesis of Christian hope and is utterly unacceptable. We believe there is no victory in death because Christ has broken its power. There's one thing about Christianity: it's a total thing. When you come to Christ, you don't take Christ plus some other system. All in all, it is Christ and nothing else. We are absolutely and totally committed to Him. Thus, we have only hope in Christ. Repent and believe!
[GTY.org \(1278\)](#) – **If Christ Didn't Rise--Then What?** – [TOC](#)

Day 81

Chosen by God

The doctrine of eternal election—divine, sovereign choice, and predestination—is simultaneously beloved and resented. In fact, there are those who suggest that this doctrine is actually devilish. Rationally and emotionally, it seems unfair and destructive to free will, human autonomy, and

choice. And I can understand those feelings because they're very human. We think everything should depend on us. This is part of our fallenness' pride. But ultimately, according to Scripture, it's not our reason, nor our sentiment, nor our feelings, nor our desires that determine what is true; God has already determined that. And it is further unacceptable to make God in our image, to design Him to fit our own ideas of what He should be, what He should do, and what He should not do. Still, there are those who are bold enough to be undisturbed by an all-out attack on the doctrine of sovereignty, saving grace, and the doctrine of election. Making your own human god—that's perhaps more comfortable and rational—and twisting your own instincts about God is essentially an assault on Him, and it misrepresents Him. And such misrepresentation of God, simply stated, corrupts our understanding, therefore corrupts our worship, corrupts our service, and can be not just ignorant but even blasphemous. And since human reason fell with the rest of our faculties in Adam's sin, it is flawed. While it still functions with a measure of residual effectiveness and a sense of justice and morality, it is part of human flesh and must ultimately submit to divine truth in the unfallen, uncorrupted revelation that God has given us of Himself. Scripture is unambiguous about this, and maybe even more importantly, it is unembarrassed about it. Scripture is pure, clear, relentless, and repetitive—God saves with His own purpose, power, and will for His own plan. So, there are many verses in Scripture, and they are blunt and straightforward. The chosen received salvation, while the rest experienced hardening. Before time, God chose them. With full conviction, he brought the gospel to them in power through the Holy Spirit, bringing that eternal choice to fruition and saving them. They became imitators of Christ and examples for all believers. In 2 Timothy 2:10, Paul says, *"I endure all things for the sake of the elect. I do all things for the sake of the chosen to obtain salvation."* That's how Paul defined his ministry. *"In my ministry, everything I do is to bring the gospel to the chosen, to the elect."* Chosen by God to be set apart from sin to obey Jesus Christ. You were chosen. You were regenerated. You believed. You repented. You were justified. You were adopted. You were reconciled. You were set apart from sin. Your sanctification began. God did all of this so that you could inherit the eternal glory He had already created for you before the beginning of time. That gives God all of the glory. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-49\)](http://GTY.org) – **Election: Christ's Honor and Our Blessing** – [TOC](#)

Day 82

Whose Sins Does Jesus Forgive?

Jesus spent His time with the outcasts. He is *"the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners."* *Matt 11:19.* But because those people came to terms with their true condition, Jesus was able to minister to them. They were the sick, who knew they were sick, not only physically but spiritually, and desperately needed the physician. Jesus then came to those who had repented. He came to search for and rescue the lost. In a dramatic incident, Jesus healed the paralytic, who had come to grips not only with the problems of his illness but also with the sins of his life and heart. In his silence, Jesus read his heart and gave him what he desperately wanted and needed: forgiveness. To prove that He could forgive his sins, which aren't visible, He healed his body, which is visible,

and only God can do both of those things. So, whose sins does Jesus forgive? The answer is the worst sinners. But the Lord doesn't call people who aren't penitent to follow Him. What is necessary is to be penitent over your sin, to know that God offers forgiveness (which is the message Jesus preached), and to cry out to God from the heart for that forgiveness. God's not seeking a moral majority. He's seeking a holy minority. Jesus turns His back on moral people and makes sinners holy. Why? This is because Jesus is the incarnate God, also known as "*the Lord who heals you.*" *Exodus 15:26*. He comes to the sick. He is the divine physician. And he hates ritual and external morality, separate from a heart of penitence and a hunger for righteousness. That's the heart of the gospel. It's for sinners. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-67\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus Came to Call and to Save Sinners** – [TOC](#)

Day 83

Spiritual Protection Agency

Our government makes a constant effort to protect the consumer from substandard products, false claims, and hazardous materials. Yet it's amazing to me how little concern the church has to protect people from products that are much more disastrous than any of those—spiritual products being sold daily to millions of unwitting, gullible people whose understanding of God and whose understanding of divine truth is frankly at stake and whose eternal destiny may be in the balance. And while the government is completely committed to consumer advocacy, I'm not sure the church has awakened to the need for consumer spiritual protection. Our culture tolerates religious nonsense far more than it does any other subpar product. Charlatans and incompetent teachers abound across our nation and in our media, pumping out religious nonsense like a flood. The church does little or nothing to protect the consumer. And if we do speak up, they will cry foul and accuse us of being judgmental and unloving. I have always been a sort of self-styled consumer advocate in the spiritual realm, and it has always concerned me to follow the pattern of the apostle Paul, who always warned his people night and day with tears about the things that could adversely affect their spiritual lives. Marketers are promoting a vast array of subtle, substandard, false, and deviant spiritual products. Therefore, it is very important for you to understand what people believe. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "*Tell me what a man believes, and I'll tell you what he'll do.*" People act on their convictions. They live according to their belief system. So it's important for you to understand what people believe. What one considers true will influence their behavior. If we lack the correct definition of truth, we will adopt a deviant behavior pattern. So what a person believes is crucial to the way they behave. The moral implications of error are as frightening as the error itself. The error is one thing, and its moral implications compound the problem. The Christian must realize that most charismatic media preachers and teachers have an erroneous belief system that cannot restrain sin and the flesh but rather tends to feed pride, materialism, and spiritual shallowness. It all begins with the basic standard. And for us, the standard is the Word of God, rightly interpreted. They claim it to be the Word of God, but regrettably, their interpretation is not accurate. We correctly interpret the Word of God as objective truth. They mistakenly perceive the Word of God as subjective truth. Biblical

Christianity says that the Scriptures, rightly interpreted, are the ultimate and only standard for all spiritual truth. We receive sound doctrine from the Bible through our minds, rational processes, reason, and thinking. And for that reason, Eph 4:23 instructs us "*to renew the spirit of our minds,*" not our emotions. Repent and believe! [GTU.org. \(61-1\)](#) – **Facing the Modern Deceivers** – [TOC](#)

Day 84

Have You Been Delivered?

What actions are necessary for salvation? You just have to believe. You have to accept the work, the person, and the work of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the inheritance. What is the inheritance? Eternal life. It is eternal life and everything it entails: eternal joy, eternal pleasure, eternal delight, eternal worship, eternal service, eternal bliss, everything, eternal perfection, eternal righteousness, and all of those wonderful things. How can God bestow such an inheritance on unworthy individuals? It is because God determined to do it in order to give glory to Himself, which He receives when we express to Him our thanks. So, first, we see that this salvation or deliverance transforms us from unqualified to qualified, simply through the grace and goodness of God, who chose to love us even when we were sinners. According to Romans 5, God reclassifies us from the unqualified to the qualified by applying Jesus Christ's perfections to us, treating us as though we had lived His perfect life. By virtue of what Jesus possesses as God, He has that power. It is His power that allows Him to deliver us from darkness. Christ's perfect righteousness is what allows Him to requalify us. It is His death for sin that allows Him to deliver us from sin and judgment. Everything He is and everything He did fits into this wonderful rescue. God's beloved Son transfers Christians from the domain of darkness, the realm of Satan, to the kingdom of God's beloved Son. We have a new King over us, and He is Jesus Christ. We have a new King in us, and He is Jesus Christ. We can claim that deliverance as a part of our salvation. Nothing can separate us from that. God has delivered us into the love of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. His kingdom, His reign. He is our King and our authority. And in that deliverance, we have redemption and forgiveness for sins. The term "*redemption*" refers to the act of buying back, and it is associated with the death of Christ, who bore the cost for the forgiveness of our sins. Rejoice! Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(80-218\)](#) – **Giving Thanks for God's Deliverance** – [TOC](#)

Day 85

Victory Over Death

Most of humanity fears death. But for Christians, we look forward to death. Every person who has ever lived, according to 1 Corinthians 15, will rise from the dead with a physical body appropriate for their eternal home, either in eternal hell, a place of unrelenting punishment, or in eternal heaven, a place of unending joy, peace, satisfaction, and blessing. According to John 5,

we will all rise from the dead. Jesus will raise everyone who has ever lived. Paul writes to help us understand the resurrection. He tells us about the great transformation that takes place in the resurrection. Paul has been discussing the fact that God will design special bodies for us. They are resurrection bodies. So he's been talking about the fact that Christians will have a body fit for eternal life in heaven. It won't be like the earthly body we inherited from Adam. Adam gave us one body type. In the resurrection, Christ gives us a different body. We now have a body like Adam; we will have a body like Christ's resurrection body, and that is exactly what is promised to us according to 1 Cor 15:49: *"And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly, who is the Lord Himself."* We need a special body for heaven; that's the point. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. You can't take the perishable into the imperishable realm of eternity. Flesh and blood refer to our bodies, as they are now designed for life on earth. We must undergo transformation to enter the heavenly kingdom. This is the concept here: the resurrection becomes necessary because we are creatures of flesh and blood, and corruptible cannot inherit incorruptible, and perishable cannot live in an imperishable world, and flesh and blood are not suited to the realities of eternal heaven. As a result, we must undergo a radical transformation. Death then becomes like planting the seed that bursts forth into new life after the resurrection. That is the great resurrection, and it occurs at an event that we call the rapture, the catching up of the saints. When the Lord comes from heaven, it happens. There's a shout, there's a voice of the archangel, there's a trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ rise first in their resurrection bodies. Those who are alive are caught up in the air, and they're made eternal. They're given an eternal body on the way up so that they can meet the Lord in the air and be with Him forever. It happens in a nanosecond. All Christians will be caught up and changed on the way to heaven. This trumpet is the signal for the dead to rise. It calls all Christians to God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-497\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Resurrection of Believers** – [TOC](#)

Day 86

Supernatural Power

Being in Christ frees us from the law of sin and death, makes us alive to God, enables us to fulfill the righteous law through Christ's imputed righteousness, grants us a new disposition, transforms us into a new person, and houses the Holy Spirit in full power, empowering us to triumph over the flesh. The inner man is the new creation. It's the real you. It's the truest expression of who you are. And the Spirit of God has taken up residence there; he lives in you. And he is power-personified. You have the power of the living God—the third member of the Trinity who is equal to God because He is God, equal in every sense—living in you. His spirit within you provides you with strength and power. He's there, so you ought to be experiencing triumph over sin because the power is there. Therefore, we are to *"Be being kept filled with the Spirit."* *Ephesians 5:18*. To *"be being kept filled"* means to yield to the spirit totally. And that simply means to give up your own control, your own agenda, and let the Holy Spirit habitually permeate your life and exercise full control by letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. This means a saturation of the Word of God, a surrendering of your will, your intellect, your body, your time, your talent, your

treasure—everything to the Spirit's control. It's really the elimination of yourself; it's really the death of you. But the power's there. The power of victory is the Holy Spirit. But only the brethren know the joy of rising above the corruption. And for us, there are those times of triumph and those great moments of exhilarating joy when we see the flesh subdued by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, the power of victory is the Holy Spirit, and the people of victory are the brethren, the Christians. The point is, if you're living totally after the flesh, you're one of those who will die because that kind of life is true of the spiritually dead, not the spiritually alive. But if, by the spirit, you're putting to death the deeds of the body, you'll live. You will experience eternal life as you demonstrate your transformation. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-171\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Key to Spiritual Victory** – [TOC](#)

Day 87

The Value and Honor of Work

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and the sin of selfishness only exacerbates the problems. Greed is a controlling element in our society; materialism is a controlling element, as we know. Money-hungry people drive this economy in great measure. It's not the love of work for work's sake. It's not the nobility of work as it once was. It's not the self-satisfaction of making something, seeing it made, and taking pride in your product. If we're going to see any kind of right perspective, we have to go to God's Word and understand what God has said about work. Understanding God's ordained principles drives this approach. The principle of submission is the overarching principle that must work in a healthy economic environment, believe it or not. This understanding of mutual submission in the fear of Christ is at the core of all good relationships, whether they are marriage relationships, parent-child relationships, or labor relationships. All of us, if we're going to have the right relationships in every environment, must grasp the great truth of submission. There is a great and classic illustration of submission. It is Jesus Christ's incarnation—the self-emptying for unworthy sinners. Therefore, a wife should be submissive to her husband, even though he's not perfect. A husband should submit himself, all of his strength, all of his capacities, and all that he has to offer to meet the needs of his wife, both physical and spiritual. Children should submit themselves to the care of their parents, and parents should submit themselves to the process of rearing their children and giving their children what is best and what is going to lead them to the knowledge of God in Christ. The same thing holds true in the workplace. It is an area where submissions must be made. The worker submits to the one who is above him. The one who is over him exercises a kind of submission in that he seeks the very best for his employee. This is all workable when energized by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul says that's how you get in touch with God. You do it by being filled with the Spirit. When your life is under the control of the Holy Spirit, first of all, there will be a joy that causes you to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord. There will be an attitude of gratitude. This is the work of the Spirit of God, and it certainly should manifest itself and likely will only manifest itself among those who follow God's

pattern, those who belong to Jesus Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-171\)](http://GTY.org) – **God's Perspective on Work** – [TOC](#)

Day 88

The Only Way to Live with Life

There's only one way to handle your problems: firmly stand by what you know. God is eternal, reigns in eternity, is self-existent, holy, and faithful. So, there's only one way to handle the problems of life, and there's only one way to live with life, and that's to back up and stand on what you know is true. That's having a firm stand. If your practice is consistent with your position, you're adequate. What you need to do is line up your practice with your position, and you can stand firm. An adequate stand, then, is the first key to adequacy. Positionally, you're adequate because God's on your team. Whenever your circumstances get heavy, who do you rejoice in? You rejoice in the Lord. Want to know what rejoicing is? It's reckless abandonment of Jesus Christ in any circumstance. That's security. What do you have to fear? The Lord is here. On the other hand, man-made securities are never more than tissue-paper towers. Money, fame, friends, bombs, armies, medicines, and hospitals are just little expedencies to postpone the inevitable. But we have real security—the presence of Jesus Christ. Practice His presence. Christ-conscious living. How do you just constantly have Christ in your mind? Practicing the presence of Christ means having your mind saturated with His thoughts. And there's only one way to do that, which is to study the Word of God. The more you study God's word, the more God's thoughts are in your mind. The more God's thoughts are in your mind, the more the presence of Christ is in your mind. The more His presence is in your mind, the more secure you are. So, with adequate security, the Lord is near. What do I have to worry about? An adequate Christian has the peace of God and the God of peace. A marvelous promise. Not only is God with us, but His very peace pervades us. We have the peace of God for our guiding and the God of peace for our going. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1216\)](http://GTY.org) – **Leave Me Alone; I Can't Cope** – [TOC](#)

Day 89

The Purpose of Prayer

Our Lord gave us this model prayer. He said, *"Pray, then, in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."* *Matt 6:9*. You begin with the recognition that God is the source, and that God is your loving, caring Father who has no limits on what He can provide for His beloved children. All prayer begins with the recognition that God cares. If we didn't believe that, why bother Him? And so we start with a recognition that God cares. When we say *"Abba, Papa,"* we come with intimacy and acceptance into His loving presence. Then the first petition, supplication, or prayer request is *"Hallowed be Thy name."* The Bible repeatedly teaches us about the

astounding wonder of prayer and how God hears and answers prayer. The Bible says you have not because you ask not. It says to pray without ceasing, pray at all times, and in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your request be known to God. We understand all of that. But there's so much more to understand. Most people focus on how prayer works, not on what its purpose is. Praying for most people is like sailors pumping because the ship leaks. Prayer is like a crisis operation—a last-ditch approach. That's so wrong. Most people assume that prayers are primarily for us. It's our way to cash in. It's our way to activate God. It's our way to get what we want. It's our way to put God in a place where He fulfills our desires, longings, dreams, and ambitions. Of course, that's wrong, too. Prayer is not for us; it is primarily for God. It is not for us to get what we want. It is for Him to demonstrate His glory by meeting our needs. Therefore, prayer is really communion with the living God of the universe, which is an unfathomable privilege to live our lives in the constant awareness of God, who is equally and perfectly aware of us. Prayer is this incredible privilege of communing with God on behalf of His glory and bringing our wants only insofar as they fit into His glorious purpose. Prayer is truly coming into God's presence to submit to His will. True prayer prompts the mind to immediately contemplate God's glory, and it should remain there until the believer's soul receives a proper impression. All prayer aims to glorify God, and a key verse is John 14:13. *"Whatever you ask in My name,"* Jesus said, *"that will I do so that the Father may be glorified."* That tells us the purpose of prayer. Prayer is first and foremost a recognition of God's majestic glory, and it is an act of submission to that glory. All petitions, all supplications, all passions, all requests, and all needs are subject to God's glory. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-148\)](http://GTY.org) – **Hallowed Be Thy Name** – [TOC](#)

Day 90

The Purpose of Miracles

How did Jesus convince people that He could forgive sin? He came to preach the gospel of forgiveness, and He proves that He can forgive sin by demonstrating the power of God, which is His own power, in miracles. He demonstrated His authority over disease and demons, and that was visible. All of that was simply to demonstrate His divine power so that they would understand that He can also forgive sins. But how do you prove forgiveness for sin? What visible reality validates that? His goal was not to heal people; His goal was not to deliver them from demons. His goal was to give them forgiveness. All of that miracle-working was to demonstrate His divine nature so that people would understand that He had the power to forgive sin, which belonged only to God. Christianity has to get to that point, or it's a misrepresentation. Faith is invisible to us, but it is visible to God. And the only way you can have your sins forgiven is to believe. Your sins will receive forgiveness if you believe in Christ. This is the message of Christianity: Jesus will forgive all your sins in a moment, when you come to Him, believe in Him, and cry out like the publican, *"Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner."* *Luke 18:13*. His point is this: If He can do miracles, He is God; and if He is God, He can forgive sin. But Jesus wants you to know that all the healings He did were *"so that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."* *Mark 2:10*. We all require forgiveness. Remember, it isn't sin that sends people to hell; it's unforgiven

sin. So, how can we receive the miracle of forgiveness? Jesus says, *"If you believe in Me—confess Me as Lord and Savior—and you will pass from death to life, from hell to heaven."* Jesus only performed miracles to demonstrate that He came to forgive sins. That is Christianity's message, and that is man's greatest need. And aren't you glad that that's what Christianity provides? Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-140\)](http://GTY.org) – **Man's Greatest Need, God's Greatest Gift** – [TOC](#)

Day 91

The Music of the Redeemed

What does the Bible say about music in the church? Music dominates our culture to a degree that it never has in the history of the human race. It is admittedly a powerful emotional stimulator. It is also a gift from God. It is a common grace. You couldn't imagine the world without music. With more music than the world has ever known before, people are literally engulfed in music all the time. It doesn't matter where you go, what restaurant you're in, or what store you're in. What this tells us is that music meets a human need. Music finds its way into people's hearts. But music is not just associated with the need for comfort, rest, tranquility, peace, and sleep. It is associated with every other aspect of life. Music can be high, noble, and exalted. It can be elevating. It can be uplifting. It can raise that which is honorable and pure. Music can be low, degrading, debasing, or even ugly. It can literally tamper with all ranges of human experience and emotion. But one thing is for sure: music rides the back of the culture in whatever direction it is going. Today, our society's rapidly degenerating corruption dominates music. It is a reflection of the rapid degeneration of our culture. For music that is beautiful and magnificent, we have to go backwards in time. We have to break free from this culture and go to another time and place. We even call it classical music. We have to go back, sometimes decades, maybe centuries, to find music that endures because of its quality, its elevation, its dignity, and its excellence. With the decline and debasing of music has come the decline of musicianship. We have people with no talent playing music with no meaning, except to debase the culture. We are a sensual culture, and that's where our music is taking us. Secular music will always reflect the culture. It will always reflect societal attitudes. Its music depicts a changing, ever-increasing corruption of a fallen world. The music of the redeemed is different. We live in a different world. We are citizens of a different kingdom. The music of the redeemed is distinct from the music of the world. The music of the redeemed is reflective of that which is most lofty, most elevated, most exalted, and most noble. And, like God's truth, it never changes. So our music doesn't fit the culture. Music doesn't ride the culture among the redeemed; it simply reveals the truth, and the truth never changes. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-428\)](http://GTY.org) – **Is Music Worship?** – [TOC](#)

Day 92

We Must be Reasonable

What is reason? Reason is simply a cause-and-effect mechanism. Reason is simply thinking our way through patterns of cause and effect. This leads to this, this leads to this, and that's how reason works. And eventually, you get back to the first cause of the massive universal effect of creation. Therefore, God endows all human beings with reason, a tool that guides them directly back to Him. Any thinking person knows that you can't have an effect without a cause. You ask me where this wrist watch came from, and if I say, *"Well, there was a bunch of tin in a box, and I pulled it out, and it just started to tick, and this is it,"* it's ridiculous. Well, how can you explain the universe in such a way? It's an absurdity. Is it reasonable to believe that nobody times nothing equals everything? That's total irrationality. I'll give you a little thing to think about. A scientist named von Neumann conceived an invention known as the ultimate machine, which all engineers and scientists are familiar with. The von Neumann machine is the ultimate machine; it is self-perpetuating. It has the capacity within itself to sustain itself. Wow! Secondly, it is self-repairing. Anything that ever goes wrong with it, it can fix. It has the ability to fix itself, generate whatever new parts it needs, and reassemble them so that it functions. And then, thirdly, it reproduces itself. It multiplies itself. This would be like having a car that generated its own fuel and fixed itself, and when you came out in the morning, there were three little cars sitting next to it. Okay? This is a von Neumann machine. The complexity of this machine is staggering. Therefore, the construction of this machine is impossible due to its overwhelming complexity. It becomes exponential, almost to infinity, to put something together like this; it cannot be done. And yet, that is exactly what every single organic cell in existence in the biological world does. It's a factory full of perfect self-generating, self-repairing, and self-reproducing machinery. Don't tell me that at one point there was a pile of goo that decided to become this. Reason tells me there has to be a Creator. And the whole world believed that until Darwin came along. We must be reasonable, or else. Repent and believe! GTY.org ([GTY109](#)) – **A Nation Abandoned by God** – [TOC](#)

Day 93

The Withdrawn Invitation

The popular perception in the world concerning Jesus is that He was a man of love who came to bring peace, that His message was peace on earth, peace through love. That's sort of the pop idea about Jesus and it's reinforced at the Christmas season because people are reminded that a Child is born, a Son is given and He's going to be called the Prince of Peace, and the angels announced to the shepherds that He would bring peace on earth and even the Jews had this expectation that when the Messiah came, peace would come with Him. But Jesus absolutely shattered that expectation. Consider Luke 12:51. *"Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division."* There cannot be world peace, there cannot even be Jewish peace, and there can be no kingdom at all on this earth until He reigns in the individuals' hearts. There will be no national peace until there's personal peace. It's sensible for you to assume that He's bringing peace. Indeed, it is, especially considering the promises made in the Old Testament. But the promised peace was taken away. Why? Because they had rejected the Prince of Peace. They had therefore forfeited the kingdom of peace. It could only come through individuals putting faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah Savior, and if there was no peace between the sinner and God, there would be no peace among the people. There would be no kingdom of peace. There will be no kingdom of peace until salvation comes to the heart, so in place of peace comes division. In Matthew 10:34–36, you have a comparative passage to this where Jesus said the same thing. On that occasion, He said He came not to bring peace but a sword. Jesus, who came as the Prince of Peace, becomes the great divider, the source of disunity and separation. So Jesus says He's come to bring division. Instead of uniting people in His kingdom of blessing, He divides them, and He divides them both in time and eternity. The people are recalcitrant, fixed, hard, and stubborn. And as Jesus approaches Jerusalem headed for the cross, He sees the city and wept over it, saying, *"If you had known in this day, even you, the things that make for peace."* You missed it! *"But now they've been hidden from your eyes."* That is one serious condition. When peace is offered, you reject it, and then it's no longer offered. They thought He was bringing peace. No, as it turned out, because they rejected Him as the Prince of Peace, He brought destruction. So the warnings escalate until, finally, they are hidden. There is a time. There is an opportunity, but God has the right to shut it down whenever He wants. He did it in history, and He will do it in the life of every individual who continues to reject His invitation. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-178\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus, the Great Divider** – [TOC](#)

Day 94

The Only Gate to Heaven

Saving faith requires hearing Christ's message with faith. *"Faith comes by hearing the message concerning Christ."* *Romans 10:17*. Christ, and Christ alone, is the gate. No Christ; no salvation. No Christ, no heaven. In that sense, it is a gate that is very narrow. This is the word of the living God. You believe in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you enter. You do not, and you will not enter. There is no other way in. All other religious gates, though marked as heaven, end up in hell. Any deviation from the person of Jesus Christ, the work of Jesus Christ, or the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith and grace alone will lead you to hell. You must enter. You must make a commitment to come to Christ, and this is the only way. God has the right to do it the way He wants, and this is the way He chose to do it. Salvation is only for one person at a time, one by one, by faith in Christ. You must enter; you must enter this narrow gate; you must enter alone. *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."* *Matt 7:15*. They're selling tickets to the broad road. Beware of them. They're pushing people en masse into false religions. It's hard to find a true preacher, to humble yourself, to turn from your sin, and to repent, because sin, pride, and self-will are the truest expressions of your fallen condition. It's the most natural thing for you to do. You must search for and find the narrow gate, and finding it is not an easy task. Becoming a Christian is not easy; it's hard because the kingdom opens up only to those who seek with all their hearts. You're not going to sleep your way into the kingdom. The kingdom requires earnest endeavor, untiring energy, and utmost exertion because Satan is mighty and has a vast array of helpers, because he has many false prophets and deceivers all over the world, and because he actually receives support from the fifth column established in every man's

heart: the love of sin. It requires vigor, eagerness, and a willingness to conquer and take possession of the kingdom with all its blessings of salvation, to let go of the love of sin, to desire forgiveness and deliverance from sin, and to relinquish pride and self-will. This is not for weaklings. This is not for waverers. This is not for compromisers. The conflict is often fierce. Let go of self, and submit fully to Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-325\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Only Road to Heaven** – [TOC](#)

Day 95

God's Will for You

How can I know God's will for my life? We can determine God's will for our lives by examining Scripture, but first, we need to make several assumptions. Assumption number one: God has a will for your life. God has a purpose for your life. He is not nebulous, vague, or undecided; he is not without an opinion about you; he has a specific plan for your life. Secondly, He wants you to know what it is. God does have a will for your life, because He has a will for everything and everyone. God would therefore want you to know what the will was so you could fulfill the purpose that He designed. And thirdly, you would expect to find it in an obvious place. The most obvious place for me to look for God's will is in the place where God has revealed His will, namely the Bible. We have to start with the Bible. Scripture states that God's will prioritizes the salvation of men. He is not willing for them to perish. 1 Timothy 2:4 says, *"God, our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* Why Jesus Christ, God's provision, a ransom for all? Because God is a saving God who desires all men to be saved. This reveals the fundamental aspect of God's will: God's readiness to save both men and women. That's where it all starts. Obviously, if you're not saved and haven't obeyed God's will at step one, God is not involved in expressing His will for your life in any positive sense. God does not lead those who don't know Him. God does not lead those who do not love Him. He leads people to salvation, but apart from that, for those who reject that salvation, God is not leading them. So if you have never come to salvation, you are on your own. The only thing God has planned for you is eternal judgment; that's it. Jesus said in John 10:4, *"His sheep follow Him because they know His voice."* He leads His own. Without salvation, you cannot even participate in God's leadership. Without Christ, you are a stranger to God, an illegal alien, and you are hanging around the fringes of a kingdom to which you don't belong. Without Christ, you are a rebel. Until you know Christ, you are not even involved in the unfolding of God's purpose and will. According to the Father's will, you must believe in the Son. The Father's will is for you to love the Son. God's will requires that you commit your life to Christ. The gospel is a command. The Bible never invites anyone to come to Christ; it commands people to do so. Therefore, God's will is that people be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU105\)](http://GTY.org) – **Knowing God's Will** – [TOC](#)

Day 96

A Lesson from a Leper

To prove continuously that He is in fact the Messiah, who can forgive sin and bring salvation, Jesus demonstrated supernatural power in three categories: the area of demons, disease, and death. The miracle record of Jesus is essential to the Christian faith because these are the proofs of His supernatural, divine nature. If He is not supernatural, tear up your New Testament. The Christian faith becomes inexplicable on any legitimate grounds. It's fantasy, or it's outright deception. But because the miracles did happen, they are true; He is God, and He is our Redeemer. On one occasion, Jesus encounters a man with leprosy and heals him. I find this an irresistible analogy to the sinner. And while that's not the point of the passage, it is an irresistible connection. This man is a graphic illustration of how a sinner comes to Christ. Jesus could see his urgency, his humility, and his faith. And He healed him. That's like the desperate sinner. Sovereign love responded with sovereign power, and He spoke that healing into reality. Astonishing power, tantamount to ending the cancer epidemic today by healing everybody who had the disease. That's what He did regarding leprosy in Galilee. All you modern so-called healers: Match that or be silent in the presence of the true Healer. People think that if the Lord just came and healed everybody, everyone would believe. Listen, He banished disease from the land of Israel, and they killed Him. However, some individuals, like this man, came to believe, and they were seeking spiritual healing from sin rather than from a disease. Salvation is so vividly illustrated here. The man had the worst human condition: wretched, disfiguring, incurable, dominating, isolating, and deadly. He knew his condition. He knew there was only one person who could change it. He came desperately, reverently, urgently, humbly, and trustingly. And the compassionate Lord met the sincere heart, unleashing grace and power upon that man's life to recreate him. The Lord then called him to obedience and witness. That's a pretty irresistible analogy for salvation. The sinner is far more desperate than that; he has a far more deadly disease, far more disfiguring. The Savior comes to save sinners. If you've come to that point in your life where you're like this man, in the spiritual sense, you've reached the level of desperation where you will fall on your face reverently before the only soul healer and urgently and humbly ask Him to cleanse you, with a word and a touch, He'll recreate you. Jesus could heal physical diseases, but only really as evidence that He was the soul healer who cleanses from sin. If you come like this man did, He'll cleanse you. Repent and believe! GTY.org (42-63) – **A Lesson from a Leper** – [TOC](#)

Day 97

The Messiah's Ministry

The word "*Messiah*" in Hebrew is the equivalent of the word "*Christ*" in Greek. What does it mean to be the Messiah? There are three components: the Messiah's office, the Messiah's person, and the Messiah's ministry. The Messiah will be a king, a prophet, and a priest. Normally, the king ruled for God among men. The prophets spoke for God to men, and the priests provided the

necessary intercession and sacrifice to bring men to God. Therefore, they were all mediators. However, they were all limited in terms of their abilities and mediation. All of them were imperfect. All of them were sinful. But the promise of the Old Testament is that there would come one who would not just be a king and not just be a prophet, and not just be a priest, but be the perfect King, the perfect Prophet, and the perfect Priest. He would be the ultimate Mediator. As a prophet, He would speak for God. As a king, He would rule for God. And as a priest, He would redeem for God. That is why we call these offices mediating offices because they all stand between men and God. So that's the office of the Messiah. That leads us to Jesus' ministry as Messiah. What did He do to mediate? His goal is to reveal Himself and gather His people to reign over them. His goal is to give them the revelation that brings them to the knowledge of Himself so that He may gather them into His presence forever and ever. However, in order to gather His people, He must first reconcile them. So we could say that, as a king, He reigns; as a prophet, He reveals; but necessarily, as a priest, He reconciles. As a result, His primary ministry is reconciliation. His ministry is a saving ministry. It is a salvation ministry. Those He reconciles to God will receive a full understanding of His revelation. Those He reconciles to God will receive the eternal blessing of His reign. But, before sinners can obey His truth, before sinners can enjoy His reign and rule, they must be reconciled to God. So while He is the perfect, consummate, and ultimate king and prophet, His mission is necessarily priestly. He must make an acceptable sacrifice to God for sin. And it so happens that He is not only the priest who offers the sacrifice, but He's the sacrifice as well. He will save His people from their sins. However, He will do that by offering Himself to God as a sacrifice. So the Messiah will be the one who dies in place of His people. He will not only be the priest who makes the offering; He will Himself be the offering. Reconciliation then occurs through a substitutionary, vicarious atonement for an acceptable, final sacrifice to God. That's why John the Baptist calls Jesus *"the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."* John 1:29. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-402\)](http://GTY.org) – **Messiah's Ministry of Reconciliation** – [TOC](#)

Day 98

The Impact of Christians

The basic problem with man is that he's cut himself off from God. And when he separates himself from God, he experiences no standards. So there is no concept of right and wrong, and no concept of self-worth, because he doesn't know when he's good or bad. Also, because he doesn't know God, he is anonymous; he has nothing to hold onto. He has no invisible means of support; he lacks an anchor. He lacks a source of identity that defines his existence. And, thirdly, because he does not know God, he suffers from terrible selfish isolationism and loneliness. When a man lives in a world devoid of norms and standards, surrounded by anonymity that leaves him feeling empty and alienated, he quickly begins to perceive everyone as being against him. He begins to see everybody stealing his happiness. He begins to see all of the people around him as people who infringe upon his potential. And very often, he winds up in negativism and despair, retreating into further selfishness and alienation. Consequently, he becomes incapable of fostering positive

relationships with others. Individuals who struggle with interpersonal relationships often lead to conflicts. But the marvelous thing about being a Christian is that none of those three things needs to exist, because when you become a Christian, you immediately have a standard. Immediately, when you become a believer, the Word of God becomes the standard. Second, you immediately have an identity; you don't have anonymity. You know who you are; you are a child of God. You are a son, an heir, and a joint heir. Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother, and neither are a whole lot of other Christians all over the world. That brings us to the third concept: you don't suffer from any alienation or isolation because you become a part of a family. To become a Christian means you have standards. To become a Christian means you have a sense of being. You know why you exist: for the glory of God. You have a sense of connection. Your connection to the divine Ruler of the universe helps you overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation as you surround yourself with loving family members. So, you see, all I'm trying to show you is that men in our world can very much exist in an anti-social way, and when you become a Christian, that ceases to be necessary. Christianity is not just personal; it isn't just a transformed life; it is a transformed life that transforms the environment in which that life lives. As a result, we observe that as the new man's life manifests itself among men, it exerts its most profound influence. The new man has his greatest influence on society. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2149\)](http://GTY.org) – **The New Man Makes a New Home** – [TOC](#)

Day 99

The Exclusivity of Christianity

This is the singularity of Christianity. *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all who is over all, through all, and in all."* Ephesians 4:4-6. Seven times, you have the word "one" repeated. This is a declaration of the exclusivity of the true faith, the true religion. That should make it abundantly clear that there are no others. But it seems to have somehow escaped this generation of so-called Christians and evangelicals, because in a recent survey, an inexcusable display of ignorance was manifest. Sixty-six percent of American Christians say many religions lead to eternal life. Fifty-two percent of evangelicals say many religions can lead to eternal life. Forty-eight percent of evangelicals said that God accepts the worship of all religious people. Now, let me correct that. One hundred percent of true Christians say no other religion can save. One hundred percent of true evangelicals say God rejects all worship other than that which is consistent with His divine revelation in Christ. How do we get to a place where people declare they are Christians and evangelicals and basically don't even understand the most foundational reality of what true religion is? How does this happen? You might say they lack instruction, and you would be right. But even deeper, I think they lack courage, because the reason people cave in to say that other religions can give eternal life is so that they don't have to offend other people—because that's hard to deal with. According to Christian theology, if God is the one and only living and true God, there is no other god. If the Bible is God's one true revelation, there is no other revelation. If the Son of God is Jesus, who is alone Lord and alone King, there is no other

lord. If Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin and eternal judgment, there is no other savior. If sinners can be saved only by the gospel of Jesus Christ, then they can't be saved by any other means. If people can only escape hell by trusting in the person and work of Christ, they cannot escape hell by any other avenue. If sinners will be in hell forever if they reject Christ, there is no other way for them to escape. If the sole work that saves sinners is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, then no other work can save sinners. If the gospel is the only saving truth, then all other claims are lies. If there is only one true religion, then all others are false. And if there is only one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—then there is no other God. So you get the idea. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-18\)](http://GTY.org) – **One Lord, One Faith, One God: The Exclusivity of Christianity** – [TOC](#)

Day 100

The Age of Man

While there is a tremendous amount of speculation about human history, it is frankly unnecessary. In the book of Genesis, we have an accurate account of man's history. And the historical record of man in Genesis is complete all the way back to the first man, Adam. In chapters 1 through 9 of Genesis, you go from Adam to Noah with a very carefully laid-out genealogy. Then in chapters 10 and 11, you go from Noah to Abram, who became Abraham. God establishes His covenant people as His witness nation from Genesis 12 to the end of Chapter 50. The rest of the Old Testament is Israel's story—a story of blessing and a story of cursing. The Old Testament closes about 400 years before the birth of Christ. Just about 2,000 years ago, the birth of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, broke the era of silence. Up until now, the whole story of man is over 6,000 years old. This conclusion is not an evangelical one, nor is it a scientific or traditional one. This is simply what the Bible says. You don't even have to be an evangelical to figure this out. Anyone who has read the book of Genesis knows this. There was a group of scholars who produced literature that interpreted the Old Testament and made it applicable to the lives of Jewish people. They wrote what is known as Midrash Rabbah. This is before the coming of Christ. According to Midrash Rabbah, Talmudic scholars say, "*The world is to be for 6,000 years; 2,000 empty without the Torah*" (the Law); "*2,000 years with the Torah, then 2,000 years of messianic times.*" How did they ever come to that conclusion? Because if you follow the genealogical record of Genesis, it is approximately 2,000 years until God's Law arrived. Then it is about 2,000 years from the arrival of the Law and Moses until the coming of Messiah. And Messiah did come, and we are in messianic times and have been for about 2,000 years. Those Jewish Talmudic scholars could read Genesis just like we do. They could go through the genealogy, just like we do. They could sum up the numbers and draw conclusions. They essentially arrived at the same conclusion: anyone who accepts the Bible at its face value. Of course, they were guessing at the length of the messianic times. But their literal interpretation of the first 4,000 years demonstrates a very careful understanding of the genealogies in Genesis, which is essentially what we have been saying all along. They interpreted the Bible literally; bless them. And by the way, the Messiah did come at the 4,000-year point; isn't that interesting? They said He would, and He did. And we have had

2,000 years of His spiritual kingdom ruling over the souls of all those who are His subjects, all those who believe the gospel. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-269\)](http://GTY.org) – **Paganism and Promise** – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul

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