

# Gospel and Carrying the Cross

## Outline

1. The Cross of Christ reveals the Heart of God
2. Take up your cross and follow Me
3. Simon of Cyrene
4. The Direction of our Journey in Life is first the Way Down to the Cross

### 1. The Cross of Christ reveals the Heart of God

Since the incarnation, and forever, Jesus is 100% God and 100% man, even in heaven (John 1:14, Phil 2:6-8, 1 Tim 2:5)

Jesus came to reveal the heart of the Father (John 1:18 *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*)

Jesus Christ reveals Himself as to His nature and purpose in suffering through the cross. Through the cross, Jesus, who came to reveal the Father, also reveals the true heart of God.

**God's Power:** God created the perfect world by His almighty power. But after the Fall of man — Satan, sin and death seem to have won. How and when was the power of Almighty God strong enough to defeat Satan, sin and death? It was on the cross — in weakness and suffering (the triumph is not complete yet, but it started when Jesus rose from the dead — defeating sin and death, and it will be finished at the 2nd Coming).

**God's Wisdom:** By His wisdom, God created a beautiful and orderly world (Prov 3:19). The variety of creation displays His great wisdom. But the Bible says God supremely manifests His wisdom on the cross (1 Cor 1:17-31).

### Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

*1 Cor 1: 17-31 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

<sup>18</sup> *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.*

<sup>20</sup> *Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the*

world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, and God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand signs, and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach **Christ crucified**: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup> Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

What you see Jesus doing on the cross is:

- Loving the unlovely
- Dying for the unworthy

Then putting Himself where they should be, He died for them. He paid their penalty for sin and then rose again from the dead. Those who believe in Him are forgiven, made a new creation, and entered the kingdom of God. This is the gospel—the good news.

The world would say, that's foolish. The world says, move the influential—people who can open doors for you and then help you to climb up. But Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." (Matt 5:3)

But no one in the world says to climb down and move with the unlovely and unworthy. That's not the world's way to be successful. But that's what Jesus did. He modelled for us by washing His disciples' feet and commanded us to follow—be servants.

## **2. Take up your cross and follow Me**

*Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*

Jesus' death on the cross is to pay for our sins and show how God deals with the people He loves. Many Christians want the first part of the gospel (pay for our sins) but not the second part (**carry our cross**). But the cross is the way how God blesses us.

Many Christians moan and grumble when bad things happen to them. They think, now that they accepted Jesus as their Saviour and said that God is their Father, how could bad things happen to them?

*Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJV).*

All things include evil/bad things. Horrible things happened to Jesus through no fault of His own. And through all things, God worked so powerfully in the suffering of Christ. So, when evil/bad things happen to us, and we struggle and suffer, consider God blesses us and makes us like Jesus.

### **3. Simon of Cyrene**

*Mark 15:21-22 A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry*

*the cross. 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha.*

*Luke 23: 26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.*

**The facts:** Simon came from Cyrene, a city in North Africa (Libya) and was on his way "in" to Jerusalem from the country. He saw a procession of soldiers, a crowd, and a condemned criminal at the city gates. Mark says Simon is the father

of Alexander and Rufus. The soldiers seized and forced Simon to carry the cross behind Jesus.

**Most probably:** Simon was of Jewish descent or a Gentile God-fearer who came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Being from Cyrene, he may not have known about Jesus, the Messiah.

Since Pilate and the Jewish leaders wanted to crucify Jesus, the soldiers did not want Him to die before reaching Calvary of extreme fatigue and weakness after flogging. So, the soldiers seized and forced a bystander, Simon, to carry the cross. For Simon, carrying the blood-stained cross of a criminal, which would defile him for the Passover, was unexpected and very unpleasant. Since he was

behind Jesus, I wonder whether Simon moaned, grumbled, and even abused Jesus. I shudder to think how I would behave in Simon's place.

Simon carried the cross to the place of crucifixion (since Matt, Mark and Luke all say that Golgotha follows the verse about Simon carrying the cross). It defiled and messed him up for the Passover—now, no point going to the Temple. He would have stayed during the crucifixion, where he saw the sky become dark, the earthquake happens, and the centurion declared Jesus was indeed the Son of God. The Holy Spirit was moving in his life to becoming a Christian. Mark mentions that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. How would Mark know this except that the family became believers and later known to the Christian community? Carrying the cross and following Jesus was his blessing!

Simon went to a place he did not want to go (Golgotha) and did what he did not want to do — carry the cross of a criminal. But he did it anyway, which was a blessing for him and his family. Following Jesus often takes us to very unpleasant places and does unpleasant things in the service of the unlovely. But a blessing awaits us if we follow Jesus there.

The cross is not an irritation or trouble but an instrument of death. **To carry the cross means a man was on his way to death.** When Jesus says to deny myself and to take up my cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23), He means I am to follow Him into death to myself. He wasn't talking about being a martyr, although that might be the result sometimes. **He was talking about a continual denial of oneself on behalf of others, as seen in His example. To be a Christian, I must die before**

**I die.** It means saying no to my old self as the natural motivation in my life and instead saying yes to the Lord Jesus as the new motivation. It means I must do the following:

- Stand for truth and witness of the gospel, even in the face of ridicule or loss.
- Walk the extra mile to serve others, even those who are unlovely and despised.
- Not push myself ahead of others to have first place.
- Be like Simon of Cyrene & carry my cross instead of moaning and grumbling.

#### **4. The Direction of our Journey in Life is first the Way Down to the Cross**

Paul wanted to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. But he must first climb down to embrace the cross life (death to self), remain there, and then **somehow** get to climb up. The word "somehow" shows Paul was not presumptuous. It was not his effort to climb up, but he depended entirely on the resurrection power of Christ.

*Phil 3:10-11 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. (NIV)*

*Phil 3:10-11 And I continually long to know the wonders of Jesus more fully and to experience the overflowing power of his resurrection working in me. I will be one with him in his sufferings and one with him in his death. 11 Only then will I be able to experience complete oneness with him in his resurrection from the realm of death (The Passion Translation).*

*Phil 2:1-11 1-4 If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

<sup>5-8</sup> *Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion. 9-11 Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father. (The Message Bible by Eugene Peterson)*

**Principle:** Remember that everyone gets stuck at some place in our journey to become like Jesus because we avoid the cross life, our minds are not renewed and our identity is more in our status than being a servant. Let us pray that God, in His mercy will send His Holy Spirit to convict us deeply and revive us by His word and grace so we get **unstuck**.

# Gospel and Discipleship — 1 (Flows from the Gospel)

## Outline

1. Discipleship must flow only from the Gospel
2. Discipleship must allow the Gospel to change you from selfishness to worship
3. Discipleship must allow the Gospel to maintain your freedom from bondages

### 1. Discipleship must flow only from the Gospel

**(a) What is the Gospel?** Gospel is GOOD NEWS, not Good Advice. All religious leaders give excellent advice, but everybody fails miserably in obeying it. All other religious founders teach the way to find God. Only Jesus says, "I am the Way." Jesus came to live the perfect life; you could not live and die the death

you

should have, but He died for you instead. And He did all this because He loves you. That's the GOOD NEWS. Jesus is the Good News because God came to save you from misery, sin, and death. But more than that, Jesus came to transform your heart and bring you into God's family. That's GOOD NEWS.

Now, what can you do with good news? You can either receive or reject it—and it will make all the difference in your life, now and forever.

**(b) But how does Jesus accomplish all this?** By dying on the cross and rising from the dead, having paid the total penalty for our sins.

- God is most holy and passionate about defeating evil, for it was destroying His creation through human sin. To destroy sin in us drove Him to the cross to pay the damages for me and you that are breaking His laws. At the foot of the cross, I see an immense number of His laws that I broke, and He paid for it all. And I am humbled at the sight. I feel like Paul, who said in 1 Tim 1:15 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*

- God's passion to love us meant He **gladly and willingly** went to the cross because

He loves us. **His love is the only one that matters in your life, and He loves you immensely.** Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love" (John 15:9).

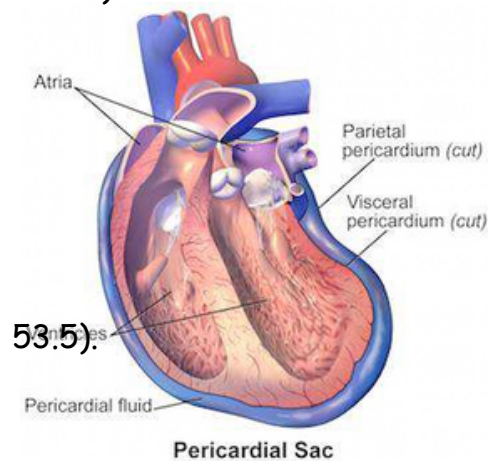
**(c) The crucifixion of Jesus.**



Before His crucifixion, Jesus was flogged (John 19:1) by a flagrum (whips made of leather straps to which small metal balls and sharp pieces of bones were attached). Criminals were usually given 39 lashes because one more may have



killed them. Their lashes would bruise and cut open the flesh exposing even the bone beneath. They crowned Him with thorns, and later He had to carry His cross (with help from Simon of Cyrene) to the site where He was crucified. In March 1986, the **Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA)** published a paper on the causes of death by such a crucifixion. They gave two reasons. One, by severe blood loss due to the flogging leading to hypovolemic shock, where the heart cannot pump blood to the body. And the other cause is suffocation as the person crucified pushes themselves up and down to breathe and eventually dies. That's why the Romans would break the knees of the two criminals on either side of Jesus to hasten death. But when they came to Jesus, they found Him already dead and didn't break His bones, unknowingly fulfilling scripture (Ps 34:20).



To make sure, they pierced His side (between the ribs) to get to His heart—and water (fluid from the protecting sac called the **pericardial sac** around the human heart) and blood from the heart flowed out. Jesus was dead. By this, they also unknowingly fulfilled scripture (Isa

53:5).

We must never think that because Jesus was God, He could take the suffering without pain. Remember, He was 100% God and 100% man. He

suffered as a man submitting to the Father. He suffered even though He was sinless, innocent and didn't deserve such a death. So, the reality of the cross is blood, bone, flies and suffocating till death.

**Bishop Lewis Bayly** (1575-1631) wrote a book, "The Practice of Piety". In it, he meditates on the cross. He asked,

Bayly: Lord, why was your side pierced with a spear?

Jesus: So you can find a way to come into My heart

Bayly: Lord, why were your hands nailed to the cross with outstretched arms?

Jesus: That I might embrace you with all my love.

**Tim Keller** (1950-2023) said Jesus was pierced to let you into His heart, and He stayed nailed to the cross, never to let you down.

**C.S. Lewis** (1898-1963) said, "This is the diagram of love itself. Jesus Christ hanging on the cross demonstrates His love like no other way He could reveal His

love. And we should hold this close to our hearts that it would influence us by the Holy Spirit's grace and inspiration".

**(d) Behold the Lamb of God.** *John 1:29 Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* "Behold" means looking intently, deeply engaging your mind, and looking again because God wants to transform you.

Tim Keller said, "*A God who says, I love you but doesn't have anything to demonstrate it—won't grip your attention and won't transform you*". But when you behold the Son of God, who is God Himself, dying on the cross for you, it will demonstrate His love for you, grip you, and transform you. **How so?** — in at least two ways:

(i) *It transforms your view of yourself.* All human beings have sinned and deserve eternal punishment. At the foot of the cross, you realise you are no better than anybody else, even no better than those you dislike or consider inferior. We are all on the same level. It humbles you.

(ii) *It transforms your view of glory.* Without the cross, your glory is based on how much wealth you have and how much you have achieved. But Jesus says *what men highly value is detestable in God's sight* (Luke 16:15). **On the cross, we see God's definition of true glory—love, giving, and serving** (Matt 20:28).

Now, as you **keep beholding the Almighty Son of God, our Lord Jesus, on the Cross, the Holy Spirit will transform you into Jesus' likeness** (2 Cor 3:18), which is what discipleship is all about. It flows from the gospel of grace and not by forcing your will to obey God (which can become legalistic and burdensome).

## **2. Discipleship must allow the Gospel to change you from selfishness to worship**

When you keep beholding Jesus on the Cross, His love touches your heart by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then **we begin to love Him more and more and more**, despite the challenges and trials in our lives. Jesus' love melts our hearts, and we begin to love Him in response. *We love because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19). **Then, our love for Him starts pushing out our love for sin.** It pushes out of our hearts all types of sin, big or small — selfishness, pride, greed, lust, anger, unforgiveness, gossip, stinginess, unkindness, impatience, etc. (We see them in others, but we skip seeing them in ourselves). This beholding Jesus and yielding to Him must be our daily practice. And when we gladly yield to Him out of love,

we

will find His commandments are not burdensome anymore to us (*1 John 5:3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are*



not burdensome). **And this is worship.** Discipleship is **daily** allowing the gospel to change our hearts from selfishness to worship. There must be **daily beholding the Lamb of God, resulting in death to ourselves** and daily yielding to His resurrection power. Let's examine a few biblical examples:

(i) James says the gospel must balance our status in life. The rich must humble themselves, and the poor must hold their head high because God equally loves both, as Jesus died for both on the cross.

*James 1:9-10 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will*

*pass*

*away like a wild flower.*

(ii) Paul says husbands should love their wives based on the gospel. There are altogether 9 verses in Eph 5:25-32 which state this. If this is stressed, it is easy

for wives to submit and respect their husbands (vs 22-24, only 3 verses). This will occur when their hearts are melted with their husband's love, just as our hearts are melted with Jesus' love for us (1 John 4:19). *Eph 5:25 Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

(iii) Paul says our giving must be motivated not by the law but by the gospel of grace.

*2 Cor 8:7-9 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you — see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich.*

Paul doesn't appeal to the law of tithing, so you must give 10% of your income. But he appeals to you based on the gospel—that though Jesus was equal to God, he did not consider equality to be something to be grasped but became nothing (Phil 2:6-7). **On the cross**, Jesus was naked, thirsty, hungry and in need of everything — He had nothing and became nothing. That's how poor He became so that we might become rich because He loved us. Jesus gave us everything. When we behold Jesus on the cross, we become like Him — givers, servers and lovers.

(iv) Paul says the grace of God teaches us to say no to ungodliness. This grace comes out from a crucified Saviour (v14).

*Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live*

*self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Now, there are many ways to say no to sin —e.g. I may say no to sin because:

- (a) I will look bad in the eyes of other people. My reputation will be ruined.
- (b) I am frightened of getting caught in my sin. What will people say?
- (c) I will hate myself the following day
- (d) I will have a constant low esteem
- (e) God will not bless me etc. etc etc

Now, we see all these reasons come from selfishness—which is sin in itself. We are more concerned about the consequence of our sins rather than offending God.

But when you keep looking at the cross, Jesus' love breaks your heart for you,

and

you will say no to sin because you love Him! **That's worship**. And use your love for Jesus to motivate you to avail of His grace to say no to all unrighteousness, including patterns of big and small sins that stick to you like a shadow wherever you go. Don't use the grace of God in vain.

*John 14:21,23 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them. . .23 Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father*

*will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*

### **3. Discipleship must allow the Gospel to maintain your freedom from bondages**

*Jer 50:4-5 "Then the people of Israel and Judah will join together," says the Lord, "weeping and seeking the Lord their God. They will ask the way to Jerusalem and will start back home again. They will bind themselves to the Lord with an eternal covenant that will never again be broken."*

The Israelites were idolatrous, and God sent them to exile to Babylon for 70 years. But Jeremiah prophesied to Israel that after 70 long years in captivity in Babylon, God would permit them to return to Israel with unity, weeping in repentance, and humbly seeking the Lord. These elements of **unity** (forgiving others, reconciliation), repentance, and seeking the Lord are crucial when we seek

the Lord for freedom from our bondages (e.g., addiction, spiritual battles). You will grow in these three elements when committed to church life.

We experience victory, freedom, and joy in the Lord when we are born again. **But the key to maintaining** our freedom and joy is in vs 5: "*They will bind themselves*

to the Lord with *an eternal covenant that will never again be broken.*" That eternal covenant is the New Covenant secured by the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross (Luke 22:20)—it is the gospel. *If we stay connected to the Lord, in other words, when we abide in Christ, His power will give us the strength to resist the places, people, thoughts, and sins that led us into captivity in the first place.*

**Quote:** Remember, we never find freedom from bondage by living independently from the Lord. We find it by taking the same handcuffs that once bound us to sin and binding ourselves to the wrist of Christ. (Beth Moore).

*Rom 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.*

## Gospel and Discipleship — 2 (Your Three Enemies)

**Principle:** God's **passion** is to save His creation from destruction by sin, Satan and death. He does it by destroying the power of sin in us through His Son Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Discipleship is sharing God's passion by allowing Christ to rule our hearts — which is abiding in Christ — becoming like Him in character and gospel mission.

### Outline:

1. Moses' Intimacy with God

2. Your Three Enemies

3. Overcoming Your Enemies

#### 1. Moses' Intimacy with God

*Exodus 33:8-9 Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in their tent entrances. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. As he entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come*

*down and hover at the entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses.*

Moses had great intimacy with God, and the people stood at a distance watching him with awe as he entered the Tent of Meeting. Often, we may feel a vast distance separating us from God, which may last for days. But the **good news (gospel)** is that when we put our trust in Jesus' death and resurrection, we don't need to go on an extraordinary pilgrimage, go to a particular church or use

specific words to speak our thoughts, needs and fears to God. Jesus loves us passionately as to die on the cross for our sins and rise again from the dead, having fully paid our penalty. **Our Tent of Meeting with God is as close as a whisper because Christ lives in us by His Holy Spirit.** He invites you to come freely to Him, rest in His presence, talk with Him as a friend, even as you work, live, and walk throughout your day.

The Almighty Creator Son of God Himself paid such a heavy price for us that when He rose from the dead, God released immense and every spiritual blessing for us and poured His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So, when we remain in His love (abide in Christ), we will bear much fruit that brings glory to God

(John 15:8). **The fruit is becoming like Jesus in character and sharing in His mission.**

*Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

*Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

*John 15:8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

So, are there any problems in abiding in Christ? Yes! We have three enemies—the world, the flesh and the devil.

## 2. Your Three Enemies

(i) **The world** is a world system controlled by the devil—God's biggest enemy. You cannot escape the system. Right from childhood, it shows you over **25000 images per day** through advertisements, TV, newspapers, secular studies etc., about what

the world says is essential — the pride of life, the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh. And if you don't follow the world system, it says you are a nobody. The world mocks the spiritual principles of Jesus because the world says the physical is only what matters. Therefore, we hear so many youngsters commit suicide every year because they fail in their exams or romance, which makes

them

feel hopeless.

(ii) **The flesh** is the selfish part of your life, independent of God and in war with the Spirit inside you. The world system appeals to your selfishness, to your glory to your pride, your lust and your greed. So, entertaining your flesh is like dancing with a tiger. It will destroy you because the devil is behind it all.

(iii) **The devil** is a powerful supernatural being who was once a guardian angel but fell away from God because of pride. He has many demons (fallen angels) under him. He controls the world, and through the world, he controls your flesh.

**These three enemies work in unity and must be dealt with together and not separately. Evangelicals teach holiness (against flesh and worldliness) but don't deal well with casting out demons. Charismatics may cast out demons but don't deal well with holiness. If you cast a demon from a person but do not deal with their flesh and worldly attachment, then the demon will return with seven other demons, and the person's condition will be worse than before (Luke11:24-26)**

## 3. Overcoming Your Enemies

Now, Jesus puts His Holy Spirit inside you, which is stronger than **the world, the flesh and the devil**. And Jesus expects you to be an **overcomer and share His passion for saving His creation from destruction**.

*1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

*1 John 5:3-5 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the*



world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Therefore, remember, without adequately understanding and receiving the gospel, a person can't be free from these three enemies. But the person who properly understands and believes the gospel will be able to defeat the three enemies. The gospel is a summary of the spiritual armour of God (Eph 6:13-17). It enables the believer to say, "With all the benefits and blessings I have in Christ, I will cooperate with the Holy Spirit and **abide in Christ** instead of yielding to the world, the flesh and the devil.

*Col 2:6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, **continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

**Remember two simple rules:**

(i) World without Jesus is Nothing, and (ii) Jesus without World is Everything

If you have everything in the world but don't have Jesus, then the world and your flesh, controlled by the devil, will eventually destroy you. You will be miserable now and forever —rule (i)

But if you have Jesus but **nothing else** in the world, you have everything you need because Jesus, your Creator and Saviour, loves you passionately and will give you **everything you need** to make you like Himself, which is God's plan for you. So, **Jesus is everything!** This assurance will give you true **joy** and **peace** now and forever — formula (ii). [Matt 6:33, Ps 23 & 121].

*Neh 8:10 Do not grieve, for the **joy** of the LORD is your strength (Ps 95:1)*

*Rom 16:20 The God of **peace** will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

*Ps 4:7-8 You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. 8 I will both lie down in peace and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

**Joy:** Joy is the deep rejoicing that you have the only thing that matters in life. And as you keep telling yourself this, despite the problems, disappointments and uncertainties you face in the world—you will eventually say to yourself, "Well, **so what?** By God's grace, I'm doing quite well because I have my relationship with Jesus to fall back on. This foundation cannot be broken. The joy of the Lord is my strength".

But if you have nothing to fall back upon, then your case is hopeless. The opposite of joy is not feeling sad because we all feel sad sometimes, but the absolute opposite of joy is hopelessness. Unlike the world, we have hope even when a loved one dies. (1 Thess 4:13 *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope*). **Joy is like a piece of cork. It is unsinkable.**

Happiness is temporary and a wrong type of joy because it focuses on gifts but not on the Giver (God). But when you focus on the Giver, you can also enjoy His gifts. You can enjoy physical and emotional pleasures because you know where they come from and what they are there for. They are just samples of the eternal joys in heaven. You can enjoy a good dinner on earth because it is just a sample of the wedding supper of the Lamb in heaven (CS Lewis).

**Peace** is the confidence that the Lord is your shepherd and you shall not want. It is the trust that God is in control of your life.

*Isa 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you.*

*Phil 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

But how can you thank God for something you have just started praying for? Because you have a foundation of trust in God, who is for you and not against you because of the gospel. So, you are confident that He will answer what is good, irrespective of whether the answer is yes, no, or later. Don't squeeze God on the promise of an answer to prayer, but wait upon Him in deep trust.

Peace is quiet, steadfast trust. Peace is singlemindedness (like Mary). The opposite of peace is anxiety. Anxiety is unfocused on many cares (like Martha). You can either listen to your soul (there is unrest there—tension) or talk to your soul.

*Ps 42:5 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your **hope** in God, for I will yet praise him, **my Savior and my God.*** (2 Kings 6:1-7: At the place where the axe fell, Elisha threw a stick, and the axe floated. Hope makes you float)

Jesus is your Saviour and Lord. He is the gospel. **Keep speaking the gospel to your soul — and you will have joy and peace. You will abide in Christ, and you will bear fruit.**

# Gospel and the Kingdom of God — 1 (Image of God)

## Outline

1. Image of God
2. Kingdom of God
3. How did Jesus bring the Kingdom of God on earth?
4. Importance of the Image of God truth
5. Conclusion

## 1. Image of God

*Gen 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule** over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the **image of God**, he created him; male and female, he created them.*

*Gen 2:7 "Then the LORD God formed a man from the **dust of the ground** and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and the man became a living being."*

In Gen 1:27, we see God creating a wonderful world full of life and potential. Then God created human beings, male and female, to rule over His creation in the image of God Himself. God put humans in charge of a garden. A garden has immense potential to grow; if left unattended, it will grow wild. Humans are to care for the garden and make it look beautiful, reflecting God's beauty.

The word "**rule**" is an action that kings do. It's a royal task. An image is something you see in a mirror that is a reflection of yourself. Humans are made in the **image of God** basically to reflect God-like rule over God's creation.

Traditionally, many people say ethics, the ability to forgive, intellect, consciousness, etc., make humans **unique** from animals.

In Gen 2:7, God created us with an earthly component like animals (*dust of the ground*) and a spiritual component (*God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*).

Taking Gen 1:27 & 2:7 together, God created humans as a unique species, made in the image of God to **reflect** God-like rule (rule as God's **representatives**) over the earth. God planned to **share His world with humans** and to have His rule (kingdom) and His will done on earth through humans. Humans, made in the image of God, are a **reflection and representation** of God on earth—like viceroys.

Being created in the Image of God makes us unique in all creation in four ways:

(i) We can have a relationship with God, who is spirit.

(ii) We are creative ( though not creating something from nothing). We can make sophisticated machines, music, cities, etc., from the material God has created.

(iii) Significantly, God placed humans in a garden to rule and subdue. A garden has the potential for explosive growth. A gardener harnesses that growth to make it beautiful and productive for food.

(iv) Humans are eternal.

## 2. Kingdom of God

The word "kingdom" means an action (to rule) and, secondarily, a place where a king rules. God rules in heaven but not on earth because our first parents, Adam and Eve, listened to Satan and turned away from God. The image of God in humans got fractured, like an image in a cracked mirror. **Since then, Satan has ruled the world through humanity and caused human misery, sin and death.**

Therefore, Jesus taught us to pray, "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.*"

When Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is near", He meant God has come in Jesus Christ to remove Satan's rule from His world. Jesus brings **harmony and partnership between God and humans, thus establishing God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.** The characteristics of God's kingdom are righteousness, peace and joy produced as Christians yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).

**Here is a biblical principle** — God can do everything without us, but He chooses to do nothing without us. Instead, He wants to do everything through us. This principle runs through the Bible. All prophecies and miracles follow this principle in the Old and New Testaments.

*Amos 3:7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets.*

*Exodus 14:15-16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.*

Even the whole principle of prayer is, firstly, we seek God's will for something and then ask Him to do His will for that thing.



*1 John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.*

God revealed to His prophets that He would send the Messiah. God then inspired intercessors to pray for His coming (Simeon, Anna and others— Luke 2:25-38). (see also Matt 7:7, James 1:6-7, 4:2-3).

### **3. How did Jesus bring the Kingdom of God on earth?**

(a) God transforms the heart of the believer through the gospel. The gospel is the good news that God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to become man, die for us on the cross and rise again so that He paid for our sins and conquered death. When we believe the gospel, God forgives our sins and puts His perfect righteousness into our hearts. We have peace with God. (2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*).

Furthermore, God gives us a new heart and spirit that makes us want to obey God. (Heb 10:15-17 *The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First, he says:* <sup>16</sup> *"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts and write them on their minds."* 17 *Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."*)

(b) Jesus reveals the true image of God to us through His life. In John 14:9, *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

(c) The Holy Spirit transforms us to be like Jesus, the true image of God. 2 Cor 3:18 *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (Also read Rom 8:29)

The more you look at what Jesus did for you on the cross, the more your selfish heart will break, yielding to Him and becoming like Him. You become the Image of God you were meant to be. You can reflect and represent God on earth. That's a great honour and privilege. You glorify God by living life in the image of God.

### **4. Importance of the Image-of-God truth**

Humans created in the image of God is an exclusive biblical truth. Whether Greek, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Indian or Chinese, no other religion has this concept. Consider three cases where we disrespect this image-of-God truth:

(i) Image-of-God truth is damaged when making false images (*idols or statues*).

Idols or false images of God are forbidden in the Bible because God has already made humans in His image to reflect His glory on earth. Statues can never reflect God's glory. In Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian cultures, kings were considered divine. So, when they say "image of God", they describe **their king** as the Image of God. But God created all humans in His image, irrespective of our social status. Therefore, all human beings must respect each other. There are no classes or castes. And all humans have a God-given royal task to rule the earth.

(ii) Image-of-God truth is damaged in bad human relationships — whether in thought, word, or deed. *James 3:9 With the tongue, we praise our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness*). God says to curse a human being goes against the image of God.

*Matt 5:21-22, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' (you are nobody) is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

*Deut 10:17-18 "He shows no partiality... He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing".*

*1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

We sin when we treat other human beings with anything less than respect, and love, neglect to protect them and neglect their upliftment—because God made us all in His image. Christians have always been leading in education, medical care, and social justice issues because of the image-of-God truth.

(iii) It is important to note that neglecting the environment can hurt the truth of our image of God. We must ensure that we take care of our surroundings to maintain the integrity of our beliefs. God made humans in His image to rule the earth, subdue its wild growth potential (Gen 1:28) and make something

beautiful to glorify Him. Because we rebelled against God, we became slaves of the devil who, through our greed, is destroying God's creation, causing climate change, famines, etc. The image of God in our hearts is damaged and fractured—like an image in a cracked mirror. Through Jesus, God's image is renewed in us, and we must genuinely care for the environment. After He fed the multitudes using a few loaves and fish, Jesus instructed His disciples to pick food scraps in baskets (Mark 14:20, 5:37). Christians are responsible for keeping the environment clean and not polluted, not wasting the earth's resources. A Non-Profit Christian Organization named "A Rocha" is an example of a Christian Environmental Protection Organization. There are many others.

## **5. Conclusion**

Jesus came to bring the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. He does this through the gospel, whereby He transforms our hearts to be the true image of God — to reflect and represent God on earth properly. Discipleship is becoming like Jesus, who is the perfect image of God. Discipleship will bring glory to God. Without the gospel, humans will live with a fractured and damaged image of God and can never have righteousness, peace and joy on earth.

### **Here are some questions:**

1. Feeding the poor, running hospitals and orphanages, working against sex trafficking—are all these only social work or kingdom work?
2. Can Christian organisations collaborate with non-Christian organisations on issues mentioned in Question 1?

## Gospel and the Kingdom of God — 2 (Psalm 8)

### Introduction to Psalm 8

David wrote this psalm. The first verse (v1) and the last (v9) are the same. They are about God's awesome majesty in creation. The verses between the first and the last are about God's excellent plan for man in all creation. Our praise of God (in v1 and v9) must set the boundaries of man's value on earth (v2 - v8).

In Psalm 8, we see the dignity of man as being God's representative on earth. Man is given honour and glory almost like the angels (v5) and dominion over all earthly creatures (v6 - v8) — in both cases, almost like God Himself.

### Outline of Psalm 8

#### 1. Majesty of God in creation (Ps 8:1-2, 9)

*His Name and Glory (v1)*

*His power over His enemies by even using infants (v2)*

#### 2. Dignity of man in creation (Ps 8:3-8)

*Man's insignificance (vv 3-4)*

*Man's exaltation (vv 5-8)*

#### 1. The majesty of God in creation (Ps 8:1-2 & 9).

*His name and glory (vv 1 & 9): LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.*

*LORD our Lord: (Yahweh-Adonai)* David addresses God as **Yahweh**, which means "Eternal God who is Israel's covenant keeper Redeemer. And Adonai means He is also our Master and Ruler."

David expresses overwhelming admiration for God's majesty and excellence. God is infinitely more glorious than all the angelic heavenly beings and heavenly bodies

like the moon and stars.

*His power over His enemies by even using infants (v2): Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger.*

We could see this verse in three ways:

(i) Perhaps David was inspired to write this verse by his triumph over Goliath.

David was a mere child compared to the mighty giant, Goliath (1 Sam 17:42). David owes his victory over Goliath to God's power (1 Sam 17:45-47).

(ii) When we face oppressive problems and still praise God, we enthrone God over us (Ps 22:3). Weak as we are, we will defeat the devil's power. **All Christians must know and use their authority over the devil daily because daily, the devil harasses the saints of God.**

(iii) The chief priest and scribes objected to children singing hosannas to our Lord Jesus in Matt 21:15-16. Then Jesus answered them with Ps 8:2. In Matt 11:25, our Lord Jesus thanks the heavenly Father for giving spiritual revelation to children and hiding these matters from the wise and the learned (the proud Pharisees). The principle is that we need to be like little children — trusting, humble and open, to receive spiritual revelation (Luke 18:17). We can overcome the devil only with a spiritual revelation of who Jesus is (Ps 8:2).

## **2. The dignity of man in creation (vv 3- 8).**

*Man's insignificance in creation (vv 3-4): When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?* David was probably looking into a clear night sky, for he did not mention the sun. David sees the wonder of creation and realises his insignificance. He sincerely asks **the question** in v4 (*What is mankind that you are mindful of, and human beings that you care for?*).

About one billion galaxies in the universe are known to man. In each galaxy, there are about 100 billion stars. Our sun is only one among the 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. Yet even a matchbox-sized portion taken from the middle of the sun and kept 100 miles away from our major cities would contain sufficient energy to burn up that city completely. There is so much energy in the universe, and our planet Earth is tiny among the mighty stars. A man living on this small planet Earth is tiny compared to Earth. David is in awe when he contemplates whatever he knows of the enormous universe. He is overwhelmed that God should ever be mindful of humanity and deal with them so compassionately and tenderly, despite the pride and arrogance of sinful man.

**The question** in v4 is still relevant today. **What is man?** From where did he come? Why is he here on Earth, a tiny dot in the universe? What is man's purpose? Where does a man go after he dies? Is there meaning at all to man's existence? From world literature, we can see **only three basic answers** to man's existence:



(a) **The Hindu answer** (adopted by New-Age people). Hinduism is a world religion. It offers many different philosophies yet has two common principles — karma and rebirth. The principle of karma is that people get what they deserve, if not in this life when reborn in the next life. The principle of rebirth is that people get reborn after death in forms dependent on their performance in their previous life. Hinduism gives no assurance of an escape from an endless cycle of rebirth and offers little hope to the suffering, tiredness and pain that humanity faces today.

(b) **The Islamic answer** (adopted by all legalistic people). Islam is also a world religion. It teaches obedience and submission to God. In principle, it teaches that people must earn their salvation through good deeds. On the positive side, many who practice religions based on legalism are genuinely pious people who believe in a Creator God but do not have any assurance of salvation. On the negative side, legalism tends to incite pride and rebellion within us. It brings division to all levels of society — between man and man, between man and woman, and between clergy and laity. Eventually, the dignity of man will suffer.

(c) **The Biblical answer** is that God is the Creator of the universe. Even though God is everywhere, He is not part of the universe. By His grace, God has given man great dignity, honour, dominion over the earth, and a great future ahead of him. This answer we shall examine in *Ps 8:5-8* below.

**2.2 Man's exaltation in creation (Ps 8:5-8):** *You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. 6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

Two realities in vv 5-6 give the Biblical answer to man's existence.

**The First Reality: Man is unique in God's creation (v5):** *"You have made them a little lower than the angels".*

The Hebrew word for *angels* is "*Elohim*" — translated elsewhere in the Bible as *God*. Therefore, we could also say God created man a little lower than Himself. We get a sense from the Bible that man is the closest creature to God. Even though man has fallen due to sin, God loves man so much that He sent His Son Jesus to redeem humanity (*Jn 3:16*) and live in them by His Holy Spirit. **It is the**

**gospel, the good news.** The purpose of God was to create humans to have fellowship with Him. And Jesus Christ meets this purpose fully. Indeed, God has crowned man *with glory and honour*.

*Col 1:27: To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

**The Second Reality: Man has dominion over God's creation (v6):** *"You have made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet."*

Here David is not just talking of the God-given ability of man to enforce his dominion over the creatures of the Earth's land, air, and sea so that they obey him. But David also refers to Earth and its creatures' willingness to accept the rule of man. Remember, in the Garden of Eden, the animals came to Adam so he could name them (*Gen 2:19,20*). It was God's original plan for man, though much changed after the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Even today, we see such evidence. Notice how domesticated **animals** (horses, dogs & cats), **birds** (parrots and other birds) and **fish** (dolphins) willingly accept the rule of man over them.

After the Fall, the earth resisted spontaneously responding to man by yielding thorns and thistles. Man, too, became rebellious and selfish. Instead of ruling the

earth, we began to ruin it by polluting the air and the sea, cutting down trees and dirtying the land with garbage. The mess on earth constantly reminds us that man

cannot *put everything under his feet*, contrary to *Ps 8:6* above. God solved this problem in Jesus Christ (*Heb 2:8-9* — **which is the gospel, the good news.**

*Heb 2:8-9: "In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet, at present, we do not see everything subject to them. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone".*

*Heb 2:8* starts with repeating *Ps.8:6*, yet admits that this is presently not true:

*"Yet at present, we do not yet see everything subject to them". Heb 2:9* then says that we should look to Jesus for our answer. Jesus came just like us (a little lower than the angels) and suffered for our sins, even unto death. But, He rose again, and God crowned Him with the glory and honour God intended for humanity before the Fall. Let us consider Jesus as He lived on earth as a man:

**Jesus lived as a man entirely depending on His Father.**

*John 5:19: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing because whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

*John 5:30: "By myself, I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."*

*John 6:38: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."*

*John 8:28: "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."*

**Jesus lived as a man with dominion over land, sea and air.**

He walked on water (*Matt 14:25*). He calmed the sea and storm (*Mk 4:39*).

**Jesus is the beginning of a new creation that God is making.**

We see daily that man cannot rule the earth but makes a mess because of his wickedness. Yet we know it is also true that God is silently building a new creation behind what is evident. God will not be defeated by man's wickedness nor by the devil's schemes.

*2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new has come!*

**God's purpose for man** is to become like Jesus. In the new creation, God promises to work all things together for our good, so His purposes in us are fulfilled (*Rom 8:28-30*). God is doing something fascinating, and the whole earth is groaning and waiting for God's work (His mature sons) to be revealed (*Rom 8:19*). All our trials and problems are producing in us that glorious work of God (*2Cor 4:17,18*)

When *1 Cor 15:27* quotes *Ps 8:6: "You put everything under his feet"*, it refers to our Lord Jesus, who even put death under His feet. In Him, we, too, can say that even death has lost its sting (*1 Cor 15:55*), for we will rise again to eternal life.

*Ps 8:7-8* shows man initially ruled the earth even over creatures of land, sea and air. But because we sinned, powers of darkness now rule the earth. Jesus defeated those powers of darkness through His death and resurrection (*Col 2:15*). Jesus invites us to partner with Him to bring His kingdom on earth—by **praying** in His Name, **walking in His character and preaching His gospel**.

*2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish*

*arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

*1 Cor 3:9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.*

Beloved in Christ, we are God's new creation. We can co-labour with God to bring His Kingdom on earth by praying in Jesus' Name, walking closely with Him and declaring His word by faith. In like manner, we can co-labour with God to bring His kingdom to our families, churches, and all over the face of the earth. We can free people groups in the darkness that covers them and allow them to receive the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will now examine the three answers to the question of man's existence and see the difference:

(a) **The Hindu or New-Age answer:** We see here a futile existence, humanity facing an endless cycle of rebirth, having no answers to suffering and pain.

(b) **The Islamic or Legalistic answer:** People here strive for perfection but with no assurance for the future.

(c) **The Biblical answer:** We see a vastly different picture here. When we receive Christ as Lord, we see a picture of glorious hope, purpose, and a glorious future. God has given dignity and honour to man, whom He made in His image. Even though man has fallen, he is redeemable by the great price our Lord Jesus paid. Knowing this, we must respect every human being. The biblical answer to man's existence leads us to:

- Partner with God Almighty — what a privilege! What an honour!

- *Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before our God (Micah 6:8).*

- Be against social evils like abortions, sex and drug trafficking, racism, casteism and disrespect for women.

- Have concern for the poor.

- Be in awe of God's holiness.

We are overwhelmed by God's majesty and excellence as we meditate on God's excellent plan for humanity (vv 5-8). We to exclaim, ***O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Ps 8:9)***

*1 Cor 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."*

*Isa 64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.*

*Ps 40:5 Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you. Were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.*

Human philosophy says: "**Man is the measure of all things.**" (Greek philosopher Protagoras). But the Bible teaches us the way of humility, looking up to God and humbly saying, "**What is man that thou art mindful of him**"? Between these two lines lies the great distance between man-centred and God-centered views.