

PREVAILING IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

1609 East Del Amo Blvd.
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January 3, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Psalm 103:8-12

Topic: "What To Do With Yesterday's Garbage"

Introduction: Every horizon in this psalm is filled with praise for the God who forgives. Psalms sings of the soul with no interruptions into how David feels. Psalm 102 shows us his complaints, while Psalm 103 is full of praise and affirmation.

(vs. 20-22) – Universal praise: everything should praise the Lord. Praise puts God in a class by Himself. You forget the stuff that has cluttered your life. I cannot go into 2010 carrying the garbage of 2009. If I don't get rid of the garbage, it will, 1. Stink up my life, and 2. Welcome unwanted pests. What in your past keeps giving you a hard time? What happened that would make you think that God is more interested in your past than in your future? We must deal with the bitterness so that it goes away and never bothers us again. "As far as the east is from the west..." (vs. 12). God is separated immeasurably from your sins. I am a soul that has been forgiven.

The first benefits of this text are forgiveness, redemption, and compassion. David proclaims that his soul is sick and needs to be healed of all diseases. Why doesn't everyone get healed of disease? The context of the sickness shown in this passage is "soul-sickness." It does not say He heals everyone, but that He is the God who is *able* to heal all disease.

For couples: if you deal in pettiness when you disagree, there are three things you *cannot* do: 1. Undo it, 2. Oppress it, and 3. Disown it. There are two things you *can* do: 1. Allow God to forgive, and 2. Learn from your circumstances. Let God be the collector of your garbage. God is wondering whether you are going to deal in treasure or in trash. You need to forgive and stop digging up the trash of the past. Will you choose to walk into a valuable relationship with God? Only Jesus can take a crucifixion and turn it into a resurrection.

- I. **Take yesterday's garbage out:** Don't deal with people who only want to drudge up the past. Let God clean out the garbage of your life. If it's not today, it's yesterday's stuff. God has given us a fresh new year; I'm still here and I'm still saved!
- II. **Learn from your troubles:** You must learn so that you don't repeat the same mistakes again. Don't go looking for trash again when the treasure God has for you is right in front of you.
- III. **Let God take it away:** He wants to take it away. (Luke 7:47) – Those who love much have been forgiven of much. While you still have a chance, you must tell someone about how good God has been to you. If I'm going to remember any of the benefits of God, I must remember that I am forgiven.

Conclusion: Instead of saying, "if only," say, "the next time." (Garbage bag demonstration: You come in looking pretty and yet carrying garbage and excuses on your back. When I carry around garbage,

I let people know that they are free to dump on me. No matter how beautiful and intelligent you may be, you look foolish carrying garbage around. Trash is usable, not for storage, but for recycling; using the lessons of the past to feed your future.

Prevailing Thought: I've got to allow God to take the garbage out of my life so that I can be open to receive all the benefits He has for me.

January 5, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Luke 11:1

Topic: "Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

Introduction: This is a model of how the Lord would have us to pray. Prayer is a conscious awareness of God's presence.

- I. **You Must Practice His Presence:** Prayer is practicing the presence of God. You have to practice the presence of God if you want to get better at praying. Prayer is a matter of discipline. The disciples must have witnessed something about Jesus that made them want to pray.
- II. **You Must Be Disciplined:** You should be disciplined and have your set time to pray. When you get up in the morning, you ought to set the atmosphere for prayer. You must pray in order to know Him. (Heb. 11:6) I must have faith to please God, so I must pray in faith. Exercise: find everywhere in the Bible where it mentions "pleasing the Lord" or "to please the Lord." One hindrance people have when they pray is when they don't get the result they were looking for. So because it didn't work out for them the first time they prayed, they just quit. But you must practice in order to eventually get it right. It's only scary at first because you haven't had practice. But don't give up; the more you pray the better you will get at it. Prayer is talking to God. Bring your favorite scripture to your prayers. You don't have to fight the devil, you just need to submit to God's authority. Be sure to intercede for others; it's a blessing to intercede for others in prayer.

When you have missed a day of prayer, *you* know it. When you've missed a couple of days of prayer, *those close to you* know it. When you haven't prayed in a week, *everybody* knows it. "Lord, teach us to pray."

- III. **You Must Listen:** Prayer is sensing God's presence. When you're praying about something and you begin to feel a peace...that's God. As you pray, God will send you a peace. God is wherever you are aware of Him. (Luke 18:1) – "Men ought always to pray and not faint." When you pray and God sends you an "ought-ness," you know it's something God wants you to do. And you are left like Jesus. "Lord, teach us to pray." At the end of the prayer, I know I will be like Jesus.

Many people are confused because they want to hear God, but they are not sure if they are hearing Him or not. But you are hearing God in the peace He gives you in His presence. It takes incredible faith to see God, so I sense His presence. It's the consciousness of me sensing Him everywhere I go that gives me the confidence to make decisions I need to make. This is when your prayer life is in full effect – when you know you are walking in power because of it. The

disciples noticed that when Jesus prayed, something happened each time He did. We should expect something to happen when we pray, too.

Prevailing Thought: I must practice the presence of God and stay disciplined, so that I too can walk in the power of God's authority for myself and for those I intercede for.

January 10, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 60:1-22

Topic: "This Will Be the Best Year We Ever Had"

Introduction: Moving people from appreciation to expectation is a great task. Success is not measured by accomplishment, but getting close to God may be the best thing you could ever accomplish this year. There is a light that shines on you that can bless others. It's hard to preach to people who are war-torn. In the midst of all the turmoil, Isaiah preaches to the people to arise. In order to do this, he had to have a spirit that was open to the Spirit of God. If you are going through something, you are just right for a blessing. If you tap into the Lord, you will walk in a radiant way and no one will be able to tell that you are going through anything. No matter how rough it's been in the past, this will prove to be the best year you ever had.

- I. **We know who we are:** Zaráh (Hebrew) means "burst through." God says He will burst through and into your life and overflow your boundaries. You must know who you are in the Lord. God promised me He would overflow my life. This will be the best year of your life because of His glory and His favor. I've got favor! The nation that has favor is the nation that serves God. You know you are having the best year of your life when you know you are pleasing God.
- II. **We know where we are going:** It's important to know where you are going. Set your goals and give God glory. Check yourself and make sure you are setting goals that bring honor to God. You must understand your direction, if the way you go pleases God, then you know you are going in the right direction. If I have a road map, all I have to do is read it. (Prov. 3:5-6) I've learned to ask God for my direction. No matter how dark it may be, we know God is our Light.
- III. **We know who is going with us:** How can it be anything else but a good year if God is with me? God is with you. You must know that you can deal with anything *because* He is with you. He is with you everywhere you go. Arise, the glory of the Lord is upon you! The beauty of the Lord is upon you.

Conclusion: We know who we are, where we are going, and who is going with us. God tells us to shine forth and be My witnesses. God's wrath struck you (v.10), but then His mercies came upon you. Anybody can claim a good year when they get a raise at the job, but when you can stand in the middle of destruction like Isaiah did and declare a good year, it's power. Isaiah told the people there was *power* in vision. We will seek to be healthy in every way without hang-ups, stand-offish behaviors, or cliques. The glory of the Lord is upon you and *salvation* has dressed you. When the revelation comes, the Light (the Truth) has come, and you shall never turn back.

Prevailing Thought: In spite of the obstacles, I know that when I seek to please God and walk by faith, 2010 will be the best year ever.

January 17, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 6:5

Topic: "When Man Sees God"

Introduction: God gave the prophet Isaiah a word at the lowest point of his life. God will reveal a word that will rescue you. Revelation should rescue you. He has an encounter summed up in one statement, "I saw the LORD." The expectation is that you have an encounter with God in a way that brings you to a higher place in your life.

Five things should happen when we see the Lord:

1. **We should sense the presence of God:** I should be more determined because I sense the presence of God.
2. **Acknowledge our sins:** I recognize I am wrong in His presence. This is an exposure of your soul. Come clean with God. Lose your control to the Holy Spirit. Be mature enough to know you need to repeat.
3. **We should see our need for God:** Know that you need God. I don't come to church because I want to go, but because I *have* to go.
4. **We should leave with a dedication:** Lord, send me.
5. **We should have a willingness:** God gave him a word for his time. Isaiah was living in a chaotic time, and yet he answered God's call.

Do we ever have an experience with God that moves us from hearers to doers? The revelation is redeeming and transforming. I had an experience with God that changed my life.

- A. **To see God, practice and embrace love:** You must be a dispensary of His loveliness. You can't be the same when God give you a vision of who He is.
- B. **To see God, recognize your brother:** You must have fellowship with one another. It means to look around and see who you can encourage and uplift. It's to be a follower of the Prince of Peace. Dr. Martin L. King moved in peace in the struggles he was involved in. Every struggle we have right now in the United States is a human issue, not a race issue. We need to have global brotherhood.
- C. **To see God, change your outlook:** We need to pay attention when other people are facing disaster – it could be us. To see God is to see His loftiness and His glory. When you realize it could have been you, you realize that it's God's grace in your life covering you.

Conclusion: What will you do with your experience? It's the experience you have with God that will change your life. If you went to church to see God, it would not matter to you about the people in the church. You need to see God and have your own experience with God; leaning on no one else but the Lord.

Prevailing Thought: Just one experience with the Lord will not only change my life, but will cause me to be a blessing to others.

January 19, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Genesis 18:17 (also vs. 16-33)

Topic: "Five Marks of an Intercessor"

Introduction: God was willing to spare Sodom.

- I. **Intercessors are always the first to get the news:** (Gen. 18:17) - God wanted to make sure Abraham was the first to know because he always stayed in communication with God. (Psa. 25:14) – “The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him...” (Amos 3:7) – “Surely the LORD does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” God always reveals His heart to those who are seeking His heart. Those who have a reverential respect and are conscious of God are the ones who will always have His secrets revealed to them. Some people make things happen, some people see things happen, and some can only ask, “What happened?” God didn’t want to do anything to Sodom because Abraham sought mercy for Sodom on behalf of his nephew, Lot.
- II. **Intercessors stand in the gap before God:** (Gen. 18:22) – The rest of the men turned away, but Abraham stood before the LORD. (Ezek. 22:30) – I sought for a man among them who would stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, but found no one. There are nations being destroyed because no one would stand in prayer before God. *Prayer cannot be answered unless it is offered.*
- III. **Intercessors stand in prayer continually (even though the judgment has been passed)** – The best friend you can have is one who will stand before God on your behalf. You understand that the judgment is set, but you keep on standing in spite of it.

*Four Steps to Accomplishment:
 1. Plan purposefully
 2. Prepare prayerfully
 3. Proceed positively
 4. Pursuit persistently
- IV. **Intercessors understand God’s character:** (Gen. 18:23, 25) – Abraham asked God if He would destroy the righteous right along with the unrighteous? (vs. 25) - Abraham said, “Far be it from You to do such a thing as this...” So God challenges him to find 50 righteous. Abraham then continued to intercede on behalf of the righteous in Sodom, asking for 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, then 10 to be spared. By appealing to God’s character, Abraham held God’s wrath off from the city.
- V. **Intercessors understand God’s abundance:** (Gen. 18:33) – Abraham knew God could do what he asked of Him and went his way.

Conclusion: *Intercessors know the limit.* Once we reach the limit, nothing else can be done. Abraham’s prayer saved people in a place where no one could walk out. So those who were supposed to be saved were saved. (I Jn. 5:14-17) – We should not pray about everything. We should not pray about sin that leads to death. There are some things God does not want us to pray over, but instead we must let it go. If you are truly an intercessor, praying for what you should not will

make you sick. You need life in you and God's instruction to pray. We worry ourselves over things we should not. But we must know God enough to know that just because you can't do something about it, does not mean God won't do exactly what should happen. At the end of the day, regardless of what God allows, your relationship with God is not predicated upon what He does for you but upon who He is. As intercessors, we must keep in mind *how* to go out and get people otherwise we too can drown in the very thing we are trying to pull them out of.

Prevailing Thought: Staying in constant communication with God provides me the privilege to intercede on behalf of others, knowing God is able.

January 24, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: John 6:1-6

Topic: "How Jesus Perceived the Multitude"

Introduction: With Jesus, no mission is impossible. In the intimidation of things when you cannot see a way, remember all things are possible with Jesus. This is the message in this passage.

I. **How Jesus perceived the multitude:**

a.) a lack of faith (Matt. 4:21) – counts more than 20,000 people total. Jesus asks the disciples and they didn't have faith enough to believe. Jesus is like our parents in how they tell us what they know, knowing that we don't have the faith to believe what they say.

b.) Philip's observations – We cannot afford to pay to feed all these people. And even if we could afford it, we wouldn't have the time or man power to pass out the food. (Luke 18) – With God, all things are possible.

c.) Andrew's observations – He goes out to find lunch but only found a boy with two fish and five loaves of bread. This fish was actually only the size of sardines, very small fish. Andrew concluded the source was too small and not enough to feed all the people. It's illogical to think all these people could get fed.

II. **Somewhere between impossible and illogical is a miracle:** We run around wondering how things are going to work out. Philip decided there was not enough money. Andrew said what they had wasn't enough. But neither of them put the situation in Jesus' hands. I want my *life* to be a last lunch. I am not much of a scholar or an artist, but what I have I can give to the Lord to be used. Anytime you put something in God's hands for a noble service, *He* will make it work. What the young man had, he placed in the hands of God. You may not have as much time or money, but you've got a little. Don't ever think your contribution to the ministry is unimportant no matter how small it may seem. We should be glad the boy brought his little lunch; from his little efforts, all the people were fed. When you put what you have in Jesus' hands, He will use it for a good and greater use than you alone could ever do. I want my life to be a last lunch because the Lord can use my life for whatever He needs to use it for. What others saw about me, they saw as impossible, but what God can do with the seemingly insignificant is possible for

God. If you want to be blessed, bless someone else regardless of what you think you might get back.

Conclusion: The “ridiculous” with man is the reasonable with God. We always look to be ministered to instead of looking at what ministry we can offer. Instead of asking what you can get out of this year, ask what will this year get out of you? Just a little bit of your time can mean so much.

Prevailing Thought: What I have to give will be a benefit to many, when I put what I have in God’s hands.

January 26, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Prov. 3:5-6, I Thess. 5:17, Acts 4:31

Topic: “Making Prayer a Top Priority”

Speaker: Pastor Juanita

Introduction: Prayer is talking with God. It is being consciously aware of God’s presence. It is my main concern; I am giving prayer first place. It is my highest priority of the day. Prayer is meeting with God; He will never cancel or be late. If we don’t make prayer a top priority, we will keep putting it off until another time. When we allow ourselves to be distracted by the world, we forget our top priority. We are intercessors and in this church we pray for others. We have a prayer list and we must always be ready to intercede. Interceding for others or standing in the gap, is like the cornerback making an interception on the fiery darts. You catch the dart in the spirit by saying, “the blood of Jesus,” or “I plead the blood of Jesus!” (Rom. 8:26) – “The Spirit makes intercession with groaning...” *The intercessor stands between the problem and the promise.* (Matt. 6:33, Isa. 55:6) Trusting God means to rely/lean on Him. We show we trust Him to work in our lives and the lives of others, when we make prayer a priority.

- I. **Why should we meet with God, seeking Him with our whole heart?** : 1.) God is **conscious** and knows you better than anyone on earth - (Matt. 6:8). 2.) God is **concerned** about you (Psa. 32:8). God will perfect everything concerning you. (I Pet. 5:7) – “Cast all your care upon Him...” We are in covenant relationship with God by the blood of Jesus. 3.) God is **consistent**; He won’t change on you. God will never change; He is faithful and we can trust Him to do just what He says. 4.) God is **capable** (Eph. 3:20) – God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above... Nothing is too hard for Him. 5.) God is **counting** on you. A lot is riding on whether or not you will make prayer a priority. God says, if you set up the meeting He’ll meet you there.
- II. **You spend time by:** Reading God’s word – God speaks back to us by His word. What you study will be confirmed by others. Make sure you talk to God first before anyone else. (Luke 18:1) – The amplified version of the Bible says men ought always to pray and not turn coward. If I stay in a prayerful attitude, I won’t have a bad attitude. Continual consecration by the Holy Spirit is needed. When prayer has no priority in our lives we worry, complain, eat too much, blame others, become difficult people to be around, listen to sad songs, and get mad and depressed. All of these things are a misuse of good energy. We should spend all of our time making prayer a top priority. What an honor it is for God to invite us into a meeting! (Matt. 11:28) – “Come unto

Me..." He is the Master Teacher, the King of who I am. (Psa. 138:7) – God will clench His fist against your enemies.

- III. **When we make prayer a priority, something will shake, rattle, and roll (Acts 16:25-26)** – If you make prayer a priority, God will shake the foundations in your family and in you. We need signs and wonders. And when we speak the word of God with boldness, we will shake, rattle, and roll the evil out of our lives. God wants to bless us more than we know, if we would just make prayer our *top* priority.

Conclusion: When you decide to make prayer your top priority, your life will never be the same. You will be changed; you will receive power as you spend time in God's Presence

Prevailing Thought: When I take the time to meet with God and remain in a prayerful attitude, God will perform all He has promised for me and those I pray for.

January 31, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: John 6:1-5

Topic: "How Jesus Performed a Miracle"

Introduction: Little things make a big difference in Jesus' hands.

- I. **Hungry crowd, hopeless disciples, and a helpful little boy:** Jesus took all of these things and turned a bleak situation into a hearty feast. When the disciples put the little bit they gathered into Jesus' hands, they got more than what they would have gotten without Him.
- II. **Two things we have to learn:** 1.) Never doubt what God can do. 2.) Give God whatever you have to give. You don't know how far something can go until you put it in the hands of God. We need childlike faith. I must be open to what God can do. I don't know how, but I know He is able. When I know this, I make myself valuable and available.
- III. **It was a starting point:** All Jesus needed was a little to make a big difference. Turn over the little that you have to Jesus so He can perform a miracle. Jesus is a God of order as well, because He told them to put the people in rows and columns. The people were blessed because of the little someone gave to God. If it's God's hands, he will work it out. My life is in God's hands if I'm going to make it at all. I may not have all I want, but I have all I need. Even having all I want won't matter without peace. Jesus will work out your situation to satisfy all you need and give you peace to go along with it. He will work it out for *your* situation. The people ate as much as they *wanted*. What started out as not enough became more than enough.

Conclusion: You can have as much of God as you want. Ask Him for as much as you want; He knows just what you need.

Prevailing Thought: The little bit I have to work with in my hands is a miracle in God's hands.

February 7, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: John 6:1-35; Key scripture, John 6:11-12

Topic: “How Jesus Personified the Message”

Introduction: We have learned that every problem we face is an opportunity for us to believe God and for God to bless us even when it seems illogical and impossible.

- I. **Jesus perceived a multitude:** Jesus encountered a hungry crowd, hopeless disciples, and a helpful little boy. The disciples decided the situation was illogical and impossible. But there is a message for them to learn.
- II. **Jesus performed a miracle:** Jesus had to teach them that just a little bit, a small lunch in His hands could produce enough to feed a multitude of people.
- III. **Jesus personified a message:** (vs. 11-14) – Gave thanks (Greek) “Eucharist” or “The Lord’s Supper.” (v. 35) – “I am the Bread of Life” to keep their souls from perishing. (vs. 11-12): God is your source, your supply, and your satisfaction. God will give you all of these things. The scripture says that they ate *all they wanted*. When you take communion, it should mean something to you for the rest of your life. Will it matter to you in the hard times? Jesus did not just come to quench your pain, but to keep your soul from perishing. We have to see Him for Who He is. *He didn’t come to add more years to your life, but to add more life to your years.* Have you ever led anyone to Christ? Based on the young boy who only had a little bit of lunch to share, there are no excuses for us. God will feed a multitude of people off the little bit of scripture you have to share.

Some think they can give what they have even if they have a bad attitude. God doesn’t want these miserable misers to give anything. Have a good attitude and give with joy. What do you not have enough of? Maybe the reason why you don’t have enough time or money because you haven’t turned them over to God. You must learn how to put things in God’s hands.

When we talk about global missions, God knows we don’t have enough resources (money and people) to get it done, but if we put global missions in God’s hands it will be multiplied to be all we need. The boy was willing to share the little bit that he had with Jesus. What I brought to church may not be enough to go around, but in Jesus’ hands, it becomes a miracle.

Conclusion: 1.) Do not let your expectation be so narrow that you don’t get what you’re looking for. 2.) An incredible place for growth: the next time you think God can’t do something, remember that nothing is impossible with God. 3.) Nourishment that became our lesson. (John 6:64) – My words, they are spirit and they are life. What I bring to this partnership is a meager meal, but I end up leaving with a miracle. The message is that God wants you to hunger and thirst for spiritual things. He is more than your Waymaker, He is your God for life.

Prevailing Thought: There is no need for me to wonder about the little bit I have to offer, it’s already a miracle in God’s hands.

February 9, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Matthew 17:20

Topic: “A Public Question and a Private Answer”

Introduction: It is the word of God that helps us push out of our environment the attitude that Satan uses to overcome us in life. Prayer must become a part of our lives.

- I. **Sacrifice (vs. 14-16):** The disciples were unprepared and they had unbelief. The public asked the disciples the question. They needed to know if the disciples could perform the miracle they needed; they could not. The disciples had been going about their everyday lives, never figuring they would ever be challenged beyond their ministry comfort zones. There are some things you need to be more prepared about. They never thought they would have to step up beyond the routine mechanics of ministry. Jesus lets them know that there will be things that come up to challenge you. It's going to take prayer. You need to find books that can teach you how to pray. We need to build an arsenal in prayer. Jesus said, if they just had a little bit of faith.
- II. **Service (vs. 17-18):** (Gen. 18:22) –A life-changing ministry must continually call down the resources of Christ to make a difference (I Thess. 5:17). The disciples were trying to make a difference and could not. It was painful for the father in need to see his child suffer as a result of the disciples not being able to help because of their unbelief. Jesus wanted them to know that there are situations that require the power of God. Jesus let them know they could do nothing without His power. When you get tired, pull Jesus in on the situation. Just when Jesus allowed the situation to get to the point where the disciples felt hopeless, He stepped in and changed the whole situation. When you finally get past your own self, you realize it's not *you* working in the situation. You have to know how to pull His power, not pray to impress others.
- III. **Success (vs. 19-21):** 1.) Praying and 2.) Fasting. Jesus gave the disciples a private answer to their public situation. You need to recognize when you are dealing with a demonic spirit. It's a spirit that gets mean regardless of how nice or polite you are. You need to start going into prayer about these kinds of situations and people in your life. You must stand on the authority you have been given. If His word is in you, you have power because He operates on His word. (Mark 16:17, Luke 10:19, Luke 1:9)
 - 1.) Prayer is pulling down power; 2.) fasting gets you focused on the power of God. These put me in a position to overcome what the devil is trying to do. You must pray and get focused. You must believe that all things are possible with God. The kind of person who believes this truth, is the kind of person you want to be praying for your situation. When you begin to serve there is a sacrifice, but the success is when you pull down the power of God and know that nothing is impossible with God. Instead of getting caught up in the size of your mountain, ask God to move it. If we know all these things, why then do we walk in a spirit of lack? We have to hold on to our hopes and dreams in spite of how impossible the situation may seem to you. Be relentless in your praying. Everything I need is possible. This is an exclusive, private lesson about prayer.

Jesus said, nothing would be impossible *for you* (vs.20). This is for *you*, because not everyone is bothered with the same kind of trouble as you are. Who are the "you" that can perform this kind of stuff? *The "you" are those that pray and fast;* because this kind come only by praying and fasting. Remember that not every prayer is answered on the same level. These are some blessings you are not entitled to because of your walk.

Conclusion: Don't just pray the problem, call down the Problem Solver.

Prevailing Thought: Praying and fasting will keep me in constant communication with my Problem Solver; my faith says He will do what I ask of Him.

February 14, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 13:103

Topic: "The Power of Love"

Introduction: A presentation born out of various problematic circumstances; it's from Paul's message we learn love is enriching, edifying, and essential to ministry.

- I. **Love is Enriching (vs. 1-3):** Love values who you are. It brings value to your life. It raises the love of the relationship and ministry in your life. Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). You do all these things, but do you do it out of love? You may never get a thank you, so you must be sure your motives for what you are doing are correct.
- II. **Love is Edifying (vs. 4-7):** Love builds up, not tear down. Love is powerful; it covers a multitude of sins. Many people think showing someone love leaves them themselves vulnerable or that it is a sign of weakness. But love is boldness. Love is not just something you talk about. It's more than a gift or present. You can't unnerve a person who knows they are loved. Many of us don't know our true value because we measure what we are by what we have. You can sell what you have, but not who you are. Who you are is measured by your character and integrity; it cannot be measured by possessions. When you don't know you are loved, you will fall for anything. You need to tell people, "When you speak to me, you need to know that I love God and that I am chosen of Him."
- III. **Love is Enduring (vs. 8-13):** Love is *long*suffering. Real love knows it's real because it is dealing with a real God. It's not jealous or envious or puffed up. Be sure you go to God to find out what love really is. Intimacy is not just sexual, it mainly day-to-day living. It's the little things that count. You don't have to agree with everything I say, but we have to *think* together. Love is talked about even in the midst of suffering. Love is not measured by moments in time, but in timeless moments. Love is willing to go all the way; love will go the distance. Enduring love suffers *long*. It is a willingness to endure a person's "bad day attitude." A lot of people may really know you, but do they stick with you at your worst? Don't get caught up in the gifts surrounding the day; real love gives gifts anyway.

Conclusion: Loving people who are wrong is a measure of our relationship to God. Loving friends is just fair exchange, but loving people who are wrong is the real measure of love. There are two sides to pain: one side hurts, the other side is trying to recover from the hurt. *We have to stop blaming and start talking about what went wrong.*

Prevailing Thought: Real love should enrich and edify just like the love of Jesus. Love will endure when we learn to love day after day.

February 16, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Romans 4:17

Topic: “Praying Into Abundance”

Introduction: Prayer and fasting bring results (Matt. 17:20). There are things we can obtain in the faith when we learn to go after the abundance of blessings God has for us.

Psalms 27:10: David realized his strength on the outside depended upon what was going on within. You are waiting on God so you know what to do. I’m moving and praying in faith, but although I’m in a pit, the LORD shall lift me up. David comes to this conclusion not because God has changed the situation, but because he has framed his thinking in a new way. Even if the situation doesn’t change, God is keeping him. The way I am thinking of God determines how I go through my situations; nothing about my situation has changed but my thinking. We have to get to the point as a church where we *expect* miracles.

James 5:16: The word “effectual” means “power-producing.” If you are a praying person, full of faith, then you are power-producing. You should have tremendous power-producing prayer (Heb. 11:6). Be in a righteous standing with God, not right by what *you* think is right. What armies cannot do, prayer will change. We must come in faith; when we do, God is pleased.

I John 5:14: Different when you are at your breaking point, but for the power of God.

Romans 4:1-6: God put Abraham in a righteous position *because* he believed. We are not limited with our faith. Abraham received the promise through faith. How Abraham got his blessing is how you will get *your* blessing. Because Abraham believed, Paul writes that we are all eligible for the blessing. No one will get left out; you can receive it the way Abraham did. The reason why some blessings are being withheld is because of the way we pray, (Example: “Lord, I don’t want anything that is not of you.”) You need to understand that *all* things are available to you, *except* when you do it the world’s way. Faith believes it is possible. With God’s way, what you ask of God cannot be taken away like a repossessed home or car.

Romans 4:16-17: We are all sons of Abraham, not by blood or religion, but by the faith of Abraham. (v. 17, NKJV) – “in the presence...” Abraham is your father in God’s presence. If Abraham is your father, you take on his nature and character. Therefore your faith and what you do with it would like up with his. The covenant God gives to Abraham is to be the father of many nations by faith. Many of us know how to work in earthly operations (paycheck to paycheck), but we do not walk in the faith of Abraham. He called those things that were not as though they were.

Genesis 17:2-16 (Abraham and Sarah): The covenant is activated by faith. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham (pronounce “A-bra-heem”), the father of many nations. God gave him a part of His own name. God covenanted with Abraham, and by Him changing Abram and Sarai’s name to Abraham and Sarah, they both began to talk the talk even though they had not yet seen the promise manifest itself. Abraham received what he received out of his *obedience*. We need obedience in every area of our lives (Luke 6:46). There are too many children challenging parents, parents challenging the law and those who have charge over them. Abraham believed *God*, not himself for the blessing. Abraham and Sarah ministered the promise to each other before they ever received it. (Isa. 51:1-2) - God says, listen to Me; it happened to him (Abraham) alone.

Your blessing will not start until you resolve to start renewing your mind *alone*. You cannot renew your mind with people around you with their viewpoints and opinions; you have to start this journey on your own. (Luke 15) – The Prodigal Son looked around for people to help him but no one would because he was out of fellowship with his father. When he came to himself, he realized all he needed was with his father. God is Abraham’s father, Abraham is our father, therefore we must walk in faith and obedience the way he did.

Conclusion: We are going to get the blessings the way Abraham did, not by works but by obedience.

Prevailing Thought: The faith that ran through Abraham runs through me. Thank you God for every faithful promise you are manifesting in my life.

February 21, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 4:15

Topic: “Lord, You Will Not Regret Saving Our Lives”

Introduction: *God wants to give us a strength greater than our sacrifice.* A bad day is when you hit a hole-in-one and nobody is around to witness it. Life is like being caught between a bull and a bear. Paul says he is cast down but not out. We are perplexed, but not in despair. I am always in a good place when I’m perplexed because at least I know I’m just down, not out. We need to learn to cope and to conquer. Sometimes you have to cope with things you don’t want to conquer. Sometimes we allow the situation to press on us so hard that we do not learn how to move on.

- I. **The Giver and the receiver:** We have a concept in our minds of God bailing us out of everything we go through that nothing is supposed to happen to me because I went to church this morning. This test is only to prove that you *are* a child of God. Your day is not determined by what you go through, but by what you believe. The response that God is expecting back is in proportion to the grace that He’s given you. The Giver has expectations. God allows you to go through the storms so you can become stronger in Him.
- II. **Leave no regrets (I Peter 4:10):** Lord, if You give me another day to live, I will be grateful. The more grace I receive, the more praise I’ll give Him. Lord, if You give me another chance, You won’t regret it. God will never regret saving us, because He’s given us *manifold* grace. The containers we live in are fragile; they are not built to last. But it’s not the container, it’s the content. It’s not what you achieve, but how much you overcome. All the success on the inside make the outside more bearable. Never let it be said that I didn’t praise the name of Jesus when I heard His name. If you are not thankful, you don’t understand about the grace of God.
- III. **We are not done believing:** No matter what we are going through, we are not done believing. Paul said, I only spoke what I believed...I spoke the Word. What I believe about God is what will see me through. (Rom. 10:8) – “The word of God is nigh thee...” (Mark 9:23) – “all things are possible.” (John 1:12) – “as many as did believe...” The only time we don’t become children of God is when we don’t believe. (II Tim. 1:12) – “I know in whom I believe...” I know that He is able. Paul’s faith gave him the victory. I may be going through the worst time of my life, but I believe God is able.

Conclusion: *Faith will give you the victory.* God leaves room for you to be perplexed and troubled. All you had to go through was for your sake. What God has allowed you to see, even after all you have been through, has been covered in grace. Make sure that with all you attain, you make sure you remember Who is keeping you. Be sure you recognize that all you do comes by the grace of God. We must be worried about our spiritual lives because it is by the grace of God we are still married, still sane, not homeless, etc. We must remember that not only do you believe in God, but God believes in *you*.

Prevailing Thought: Every day I will move in the grace of God and believe on every word from Him.

February 23, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Romans 4:3, Genesis 17:2-16, Luke 15:11-31, Romans 5:1-5

Topic: "It's In the Bank"

Introduction: To you who pray and fast, nothing is impossible. People walking in obedience will do what God desires for them to do.

Psalms 27:1: David recognizes that God is his help.

James 5:16: The word "effectual" means "power-producing." If you are a praying person, full of faith, then you are power-producing. You should have tremendous power-producing prayer.

1 John 5:14: Different when you are at your breaking point, but for the power of God.

Abraham (Rom. 4:3, Gen. 17): He believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. He believed God and God put it in his account. We need to get blessed that way Abraham got blessed by believing God for it, not by works. Remember that although God promises, you still must participate in your struggle on the way to the manifestation. What Abraham had would always be good; his salvation would remain authentic. Abraham and Sarah practiced their faith walk every day. God named Abraham, "The father of many nations." God named Sarah, "The mother of kings." Then Abraham and Sarah began to speak those things that were not as though they were, just like God did. We are entitled to everything God promised to Abraham. God's job is not to please you; instead your job is for your faith to please God (Heb. 11:6). What will revive your life is the knowledge that you have a relationship with God. Your faith is in God, so there is nothing impossible to you. The problem is that we are not always aggressive enough with our faith. Depending on what you are going through, your faith is either diminishing like the ways of the world, or getting stronger. Remember that Abraham didn't have the law; this would come later by way of Moses. All Abraham had to work with was a promise. By faith, he held on to the promise. He took God at His word. God gave him a vision that could not be contained within the scope of his family. Nothing about his family indicated he could even come close to what God spoke about him: he and Sarah were poor, Sarah was ninety-years-old, and their home life was in turmoil. Like Abraham, you are hanging between the scope and the manifestation. If it's something you can see already believe or even imagine, it's probably not a part of God's

promise. To wait on God, you have got to have faith. There is no waiting with promise. In faith, there is no expectation without manifestation.

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31): The Bible said the son who was out there in the world rebelling against his father, came to himself (v. 17). He became a part of another country, apart from his father. No one would help him because he had separated himself from his father. But the son discovered that he had all he needed at his father's house. He had been out there in the world struggling on his own, starving and living in squalor. He didn't go home because he loved his father; he went home because he was hungry. He suffered because he was out of fellowship with his father. On the way home, he began to think of how he should approach his father; of what he should say because he was so remorseful. He left home saying, "gimme," but he came back saying, "make me." I don't need to know the cost of anything; I need to know how to get closer to God, my Father. Once the son humbled himself and submitted to obedience, then he could redevelop his relationship with the father. His father welcomed him back and gave him: 1.) a robe (for righteousness) – the father wanted his son to know he didn't have to hang his head in shame because he was *his* son; 2.) a ring (for authority) – you are my son; you have authority in my kingdom; 3.) shoes (for the word of God guiding you wherever you go). Because Abraham was a son of the Father, he didn't have to labor to get the promise. Through the promise, God gave him not riches and material, but the peace of God. You never have to worry about somebody saying what you can't have. I may not be able to do it – I may *know* I can't do it. As long as I know God can work this thing, all things are possible.

Romans 5:1-5: I have peace with God through His promise to Abraham (my past); I have access to (my present); I have home in God (my future). When God give you His signet ring, you are sealed. Whether I win or lose depends upon what bank I'm banking on – not Wachovia, Chase, Bank of America, or the Credit Union. All I have to do is use my faith to enjoy the relationship I have with God. I will never run out of peace, access, or hope. The one who receives it finds his completion; the one who completes it gives a response. Will you depend on Him to show you the way?

Prevailing Thought: By faith, I will put all I have into the security of God the Father. I already know the return I get will be full with righteousness, peace, access, and hope.

February 28, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: I John 5:4

Topic: "Victory in the Battle"

Guest Speaker: Dr. Norman Hutchins

Introduction: This scripture talks about 1) Overcoming, 2) Victory and 3) Faith. There are some battles we go through that we will never achieve victory in until we first achieve the mindset for victory. When you have a challenge, you must treat it like as temporary, not permanent. God allows us to go through tough times so we can get the "thrill of victory." Sometimes we go through things that we can't tell anybody about. Many Christians are living defeated lives because they have not learned how to overcome. (I John 2:16) – All that is in the world is not of God. (I John 5:4) – "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world..."

- I. **We've got to learn to overcome (I John 2:16):** 1) The lust of the flesh, 2) the lust of the eyes, and 3) the pride of life. To lust after something means to have an appetite for what is forbidden. Our flesh is carnal. If we don't bring the flesh under control, we cannot get the victory. (Luke 9:23) – "...take up his cross daily and follow Me." Because Jesus did this for us, He won the battle for us all. "If any man would come after Me..." God will not intervene to stop you from lusting after what you want. But since Jesus died for us, we have to pick up our cross. Which means, when your flesh says "yes," you say "no."
- II. **What is the good in sin?** If God asked us, Why are you saved and why do you worship, if we did not have free will we would have to answer that we have no choice but to serve Him. But the *liberty and grace* God gives me makes my worship genuine. We have to grow beyond our mistakes and pitfalls and know that even if we do sin, God already has a plan for us to overcome. Every prophet and king in the Bible had a past, so therefore we have to know that if all of these people had issues and still had favor with God, we can know He will raise us up too.
- III. **The devil's strategy (James 1:14, II Cor. 2:11):** The devil gets to you first by watching you and listening to what you say. He wants to know, "how do you spell relief?" You can find out a lot about people if you just watch them. The devil will entice us with sin just like a mouse looking at a big piece of cheese on a trap. The mouse will duck and dodge quickly for some quick nibbles and the more he goes back and forth, the more comfortable the mouse becomes in spite of the danger the trap holds over him, until he is finally caught off guard and the trap snaps shut. (Rom. 8:13) – "For if ye live after the flesh..." The reason why many of us in the church cannot get the victory is because we won't get in the word of God with the same effort we got into sin. We need to put to death the deeds of the body so that God can bring us all the blessings we need.

Conclusion: This is how the devil defeats many Christians: 1) when your *emotions* are connected to what is not of God and 2) when your *heart* is connected to what is not of God. (Matt. 6:21) – "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." You can't break away because you are emotionally attached. You want God but your heart is too involved. Where your heart and emotions are is where your battle will be. *Before you get involved with anyone or anything, be sure it is of God.* God cannot heal what we won't reveal. Pride can be a prison where we won't reveal our stuff. Faith is so important because if we don't believe we can overcome, it will never happen. I have to put my faith in the One who can bring me the victory.

Prevailing Thought: When make the things of God my treasure, the devil won't stand a chance with me.

March 7, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Matthew 7:13-14

Topic: "Be Careful of the Traffic"

Guest Speaker: Evang. Manuel Scott, Jr.

Introduction: One of the busiest traffic areas in our country is in Los Angeles. Whenever we think about traffic, we should not only think about the traffic itself, but all the people around us traveling against the will of God. They are traveling with Satan against the word of God. Whatever you do as a believer, you must be aware of the traffic. Be careful of the majority who are traveling against the will

of God. The “in crowd” and the wicked, is the traffic. Matt. 7:13 says that there are many ways and wide gates to those who travel that way. You can tell those who have been out in the traffic of the world much too long. There are three reasons we need to be careful of the traffic:

- I. **We may miss our appointment:** God, in His wisdom, appoints us to be at certain places at certain times. But if we get caught up in the traffic, we may miss our appointments. God wants you to make all your appointments including church, Sunday School, devotion, and mission. But if you are caught up, you miss the appointment along with your blessing. If you are languishing in loneliness, get out of the traffic and let God bless you. If you are single or a young adult, you better make sure you don't miss the appointments God has for you.
- II. **We may miss our exit:** Often times when driving on the freeway, the traffic gets so thick that you can't get off the freeway. You actually *saw* where you were supposed to get off. This usually means you were traveling in the wrong lane. God wants you to travel in the right lane. Some people, even when they see the lane they need to be in, don't have the strength to get off the freeway. It's your time to stop the bad habits but the traffic won't let you get off. If you continue to miss your exits, you run the risk of going straight to hell.
- III. **We may miss getting home:** We must realize that this world down here is not our home. If you've been saved and born again, this world down here is not your home. We are strangers and pilgrims of another country on our way to another home. We have one desire...to get home.

Prevailing Thought: I have a responsibility to God and others to steer clear of the traffic and stay focused on what God wants for me.

March 9, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Jeremiah 7:4-5

Topic: “What Are You Bringing to the Table?”

Introduction: Don't think that going to the temple is what validates your faith. Just going to church and having no relationship with the Lord cannot live up to the affirmation of your faith. It's not enough to say, “I go to church.” Meet people right where they are and let them know they need a relationship with God. It is not enough to just be a member of Prevailing In Christ Ministries. It's about what you do when you leave out the doors. When you leave here, you should have a testimony because you had an experience with God.

- I. **A level of maturity (II Pet. 1:4):** Salvation is just the beginning. I'm giving you everything you need to have the faith. The attitude you achieve depends on your growth. God gives you His presence and power to edify your faith. The level of maturity you achieve will depend on your attitude toward God. What I want to achieve will be based upon my mind. Those who have a passion for excellence need more than just a title, they move in a passion toward excellence. God says, I have made you a partner. He brings what you need to the table, but it's up to you to bring a passion for excellence. It used to be that people figured you were saved if you simply

joined the choir or became an usher, but we have learned that “iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17). God gives us something to do when He puts us in the race. He wants us to “add to.” He wants us to add virtue (excellence), knowledge (experience gained from learning), and self-control (because there is a calling on your life).

- II. Self-Control (Gal. 5:23, II Tim. 3:3, I Cor. 6:12):** Self-control is the tough part. I bring the desire to want what You want for my life. To grow I must have self-control. We must practice constraints to my life. All things are lawful, but not everything is expedient. It’s better to say honestly to the Lord, “I gave my best,” instead of hearing, “Well done, good and faithful servant...” You don’t have to move that temptation out of the way, you need to get the victory. We must discipline our lives. This will be a hard task, but if we work hard and stay faithful, we will be what God has called us to be. God is trying to get you to a new level, and you’ve got to want it. He wants to bless you good because you have a call on your life. He expects you to put what He gave you into action, especially considering the fact that He sent His only Son to die for you. Does what you do honor God? Does it even matter to you? Who are you trying to please? (Gen. 39:8-9) – No one is around to stop this, but will this dishonor God? You must show constraints as Joseph did when he saw his brothers again. He had to go to another room to break down and cry. It’s not always good for everyone to see how blessed you are or for them to see exactly how you’re feeling. You have to put constraints on you so you don’t put yourself in harm’s way.
- III. Proverbs 7:6-23:** This is a story of a person who has no self-control. God does not want us to get caught up; He wants our relationship and partnership with Him to be so strong that our self-control will not be shaken. Until we master this area, there is no need to talk about the next level. True virtue is in purity, not in possessions. It will take your faith to get you to the attitude you need to achieve the promise. (Phil. 4:11) – “...I have learned to be content (full).” But only you can know when you’re full. When you know you are full, then your life will overflow and bless others. You have got to know when you’re full and content. If you are still asking for more, then that’s less you can give to others.

How much is enough? If you are going to do anything great for the Lord, at some point you must get serious and say, I’m content. Lord, I want to want what *You* want for me. Are you content in the Lord? Are you trying to become anything in God aside from a title? If you are growing, you have to move on from simply being saved. Be diligent about what you have achieved in the Lord. Daniel spoke of those who would do great exploits (Dan. 11). When the king threw Daniel in the lions’ den the lions were indeed hungry, but Daniel’s faith shut their mouths. Then Daniel testified to the goodness of God. Any one of us would probably had angry words for the king after that night, but when we hold our peace and practice self-control then we give God the glory in our constraints.

Conclusion: Lord, help me to restrain myself from what is bad and put moderations on what is good.

Prevailing Thought: When I strive for excellence and for what honors God, I learn that what may seem like a good thing, may not be best.

March 14, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: II Peter 1:5-7

Topic: "It's Too Soon to Quit"

Introduction: The picture of spiritual growth is a journey of commitment and a passionate desire to do what God has called me to do. In the end, we should desire to tell the Lord, "I gave my best." I was a partaker in godliness which pertains to life. God wants us to know that just going to church is not enough. For example, you have a membership to the gym, but are you lifting the weights? Are you receiving the benefits? You will never overcome what motivates you. When I add self-control to my life, motivations come by not what He can do for me, but that He died for me. God can use people who have godly attributes. This involves your participation, and if you do not desire it you will never grow. The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5). It takes your faith to build these qualities. My motivations must be filled with virtue. *We don't have marital problems in the church, but a deviation from the standards.* I desire to go after the things that please God. This text assumes you are already saved and have faith – it speaks to the believer.

I. Overview: Three elements that are blended into patience: 1) Virtue, 2) Knowledge, and 3) Self-Control. I must seek to treat people right because I know that is what God likes, even if it's not always what my flesh likes. The more I'm looking to get, the less I have to give. But I must grow in the Lord; the more of Him I have, the more joy and peace I have.

II. Patience: These blended together create patience. I am waiting to do what the world does not expect. You don't react to everything like you used to because there is a godly virtue in you. When you reflect patience, then people can see God in you. I must endure and hold on with patience. God will not take the pressure off; don't ask Him for that because you will never learn how to wait and your patience will never develop.

(Daniel 6:10-23) - Daniel was working for a very mean king, but Daniel kept an excellent spirit; he moved in faith. He was thrown in the lions' den and God shut the lions' mouths. The king was amazed at Daniel, but Daniel proclaimed that God was the reason he lived. He kept his faith in spite of the terror around him. (II Sam. 16:5-14) – David, in the face of provocation, kept his peace because he knew that God heard what the man was saying about him. David practiced patience.

III. Endurance (Perseverance): I am actively waiting. I'm moving forward and waiting on God. Sometimes you can't just hang on to the rope they throw you, you've got to use the knots on it to climb up; you've got to do something with it. I have to endure passed the ridicule and passed the mess. Job was not a man of patience as so many like to say he was. He was a picture of endurance. Even after Job lost all his stuff, he worshipped. I've been through stuff, but I keep on seeking God's power, joy, and peace. If you are seeking the Lord, you keep on prevailing. You *must* keep on. Pick a pressure. Whatever it is, I keep on seeking, praying, praising, and worshipping God.

Conclusion: It's too soon to quit. Let your purpose rise up and declare the best is yet to come. There is so much more God wants to add to your life. With your faith, *your* job is to add self-control. (II Pet. 1:5) - Between the "giving" and the "all," some of us quit. We have so many excuses for God, but only you and God know what your motivations are.

Prevailing Thought: With my faith, I want patience and endurance so I can be of good use to God.

March 16, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: II Peter 1:1-7

Topic: "There Is a Call on Your Life"

Introduction: The world tried to define your destiny, but He called us to glory and virtue. The glory is the beauty and attributes you achieve through your worship that makes you useful to the Kingdom. If you don't earnestly develop and mature in Christ by praying and studying God's word, you are not of use. You must want to work out of humility to deal with people. *I want to be better so I can do better.*

- I. **It is a process (v.5):** It is not a matter of what you have, but who you are. You can't change the carnal world with carnality. You must determine whether or not what you are involved with is adding to your life. We have to decide to be better. It's not okay for you to just sit in church and do nothing if you've achieved the right attitude and maturity in Christ. It's also not okay to be other people's source for Christianity; at some point you have to let the people around you grow in Christ, so they too can get mature and help somebody else. "For this very reason," there is something that takes a position. This is why Christians run out of gas, burn out, and blow out. Just like we have to do maintenance on our vehicles, we have to maintain our relationship to God with prayer, worship, and study of His word.
- II. **Add to our faith:** Besides you being saved, God has already paid the price you need to be useful. You are both the producer and the performer of this show. You have to develop these qualities so that you don't quit when you don't get applause. You are in for tough times in ministry, but you don't turn on people just because they are not treating you right. (Sorites = "truth upon truth") I am committed and understand I have been called. People don't recognize who you are because God is moving you into your new self. There is another side of me that wants to bring Him glory. I need to temper my flesh to build up the side of me that will be useful to God. If something is driving *me*, I don't have control over it. So I must work on the part of me (my faith) that will be useful to God. (Luke 17:5) – "Lord, increase our faith." Lord, increase my faith to *You*. You know you can count on God, but can God count on you? Build yourself, not on God's faithfulness to you, but on your faith to Him. I have asked the Lord for faith to achieve my own agenda, but have I ever asked the Lord for faith to do what *He* wants me to do?
- III. **Add to faith virtue:** (Heb. 5:14) – We easily pick up addictions. We'll even put one down to pick up another. We must ask the question, "who's in charge?" I've got to block the gateways into my soul. Are the things getting into my soul famishing or feeding it?

Conclusion: We must bring to the table the results of personal training. For this reason, the world will be pulling on you; trying to distract you. I've got to have God help me overcome, even after I've developed the training. You are going to be useful to God, but you've got to continue to maintain and train. Keep doing the things that add to your life and move you toward God.

Prevailing Thought: God can count on me to have faith in Him; I'm going to add to my faith virtue.

March 21, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: II Peter 1:5

Topic: “Rest from Your Stress”

Introduction: Peter gives the exaltation to build a godlike quality into our lives. Be godly by adding godly things into your life. The obvious question for our first point is:

- I. **What is God like?** : As we really listen to the voice of God, in the midst of all the imaginations and guesses, we hear Him say, it ain't that deep. (I Jn. 4:8) – God is love. (Jn. 3:16) – God gives love. a.) (Gen. 1) – In the beginning, God created. God creates out of nothing, we create out of something. When you create you are being like God, but unlike God we must work from a premise. b.) (Gen. 2) – He blessed the day, and then God rested. But how can God be all that He is and still need to rest?
- II. **Why did God rest?** : 1) We know He was not done, 2) We know He is not tired. So why did He rest? He modeled what we would have to do. To rest means to break from working. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. He gave favor on the seventh day and set it apart. In this is rest. When you come to church on the seventh day, you receive rest. Don't treat it like a Saturday or Friday, “holy-fy” the day. If I do not rest, I'm saying I'm greater than God. After we have done everything we needed to do, we need to rest. We should be resters in Him.
- III. **Where did Jesus call for rest? (Mark 6:45):** Jesus told the disciples to rest a while; come to a halt. The source of most health issues is stress. If you want to be like Jesus, you need to rest. Some people are so wound up they are just tight, they even look tight. And the less rest they get, the more wound up they are. *The rest is not physical sleep; it is rest for your soul.* You could lay down to sleep and never rest. (Psa. 46:1) – You have to know God is your refuge; your resting place. When you are tired, you tend to act out and say unkind things to people you would have never said. When you lay down, should be assumed that God is your refuge. When you lay down, and you know your life is falling apart and your mind is going crazy... “Lord, Thou art my refuge;” my resting place. (vs. 4-5) – Look...a river! And God is in the midst. (Exod. 31: 17-18) – The agreement with the Sabbath Day. If you are tired after you've laid down, you are not rested. You have not trusted God to take care of your issues (Matt. 11:28). Swap your issues with the peace God has for you. Take His yoke; swap with God. Don't carry around what you cannot handle. Get refreshed in the Lord.

God's commercial for you would say: “Are you tired? Are you weary? Wanna get away?” Jesus says, get away with Me and I will give you your life back. Walk with Me, and I will give you your life back. Maybe He won't get you your job back, but He will give you the peace and rest you need. (Ps. 3:3) – Thou, O LORD are a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head. That rest is a river.

Conclusion: Find your flow in your relationship with God.

Prevailing Thought: God is calling me to rest, so I will lay down my issues and rest in His refuge.

March 23, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: II Peter 1:1-5

Topic: "Exercise in godliness"

Review/Discussion: Do only good people go to church? Knowing you are not good enough should make you want to do better by the word of God. (Gen. 2:2) – a consecrated moment in the LORD. Anytime you are worshipping and praising, you are setting apart this moment for God. Anytime you are in church is a good time. (Exod. 31:17-18) – This is a sign that the people would want to have a relationship with Me, because they set apart the Sabbath. God blessed it, and sanctified it. This is a sign the people know they have a promise. You want to be in the thing that is going to refresh you. (Psa. 46:1-5) – The more I get of this, the more rest I get. In the sanctuary of God's care, you will find a continual stream of blessings and refreshing. If we are stressed, it's because we have not gone to God, our refuge. There is a solace and peace in this. "Look! There is a river."

Introduction: We have to be given to the development. The very top of this is brotherly kindness and love. If you don't love your brother, there is no way you love God.

- I. **Brotherly kindness (Matt 23:13):** Selfish people don't give if they don't think they'll get anything back. We can do this because the church is not lacking faith, it's lacking love. We have traditionally demonstrated our faith by the things we have, but how about measuring faith by saying hello to your brother? These things will turn me into something useful for God. This is loving people who cannot make a contribution to your life. Brotherly love is virtuous; it needs no reciprocity or response. It is born out of godliness.
- II. **godliness (I Tim. 4:7):** Exercising godliness *looks like* brotherly kindness. The more you move in these parameters, the more you do it and the less people have control over you. I need to be kind and helpful. My love has to be attached to something other than the situation. Perfecting this is beyond talk.
- III. **Love (I John 4:7-8; I Cor. 13):** If you are not moving in a ministry-like way, you do not love. When you come down from shouting, you need to touch someone's life with your love through godliness. It's not just, "I'm going to another level; I am at another level. I'm moving in this love considering myself. I used to just want things, but now I just want to do what gives God glory. You must consider yourself and what God has done for you. He gave you your life back. This growth is a process; it takes time. But the more I walk in virtue, the more God knows I'm walking with Him not for what He gives me but for who He is. Get beyond what you used to be; you need to be of good use. God is so faithful...can He trust you? Can God count on you to grow up? You can't dethrone this love; it is what it is. When you get through lifting up scriptures, lift up someone else's head.

Conclusion: Little things give comfort.

Prevailing Thought: I must exercise godliness through love for others so I can be useful to God.

March 28, 2010: Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Luke 19:41

Topic: "Tears in the Heart of God"

Introduction: The city is often an irresistible magnet when the heart is young.

- I. **How the people see a city:** People look at a city from their own points of view. The young see it as romantic and exciting; a business person as an opportunity; a statistician as something to be counted; a poet takes an artistic view; a moralist would see it as how things should be.
- II. **How Jesus sees a city:** Jesus was coming upon the city of Jerusalem. People were coming from all over the world to see the city during the Feast of the Passover. There was joy in this city, abuzz with excitement. And then Jesus looked over the city and cried. It was a deep, heartbreaking cry. It was the voice of the bravest man ever; tears from the heart of God. We can actually see how God feels here, because Jesus said, if you have seen Me, then you have seen the Father. Why is Jesus crying? Is it because of an impending doom coming to Jerusalem or the impending cross? Neither. He is crying because of the groping blindness of human ideals.
- III. **The groping blindness of human ideals:** Jesus is crying because the people think they can actually make it without Him. The hour of their visitation is upon them and they have no idea. He is visiting and it doesn't matter to them. They don't even recognize Him. Jesus is there, and the blessings He has for them, they don't even want. You run to and fro trying to find "this person" and "that person," texting, Twittering, and emailing. But do you ever run to get in His presence?

Conclusion: The hour of your visitation. Your visitation has come, but you don't even know it. If it is going to mean something today, His visitation has to matter. Your deliverer is here, but you don't want His help. God sees that when He is there, it doesn't matter to you. Are you having a "meaningful shout" when you shout? Resurrection Sunday has to matter to you. You have to get ready for this day. Who can stop God from crying? It is those who worship the Lord in spirit and in truth; those who say, they will bless the Lord in spite of the circumstances. We must strive for more than religion, but a relationship with God. This is the hour of our visitation. You can search around all you want trying to figure out the economy, unemployment, and education but the answers don't lie in men; the answer is in our Savior, Jesus Christ. We forfeit so much peace and bear so much needless pain, all because we don't carry everything to God in prayer. What peace might you have known if you had of got out of your own way? But Jesus says, the peace He leaves with you is not as the world gives it. You may have missed many opportunities for peace in your life, but Jesus says it's not too late. We must be about our Father's business.

Prevailing Thought: I don't want to miss my visitation. I will turn my heart to the One my heart longs to have a relationship with, and find my peace.

March 30, 2010: Bible Study

Scripture Reference: Matthew 26:36-46

Topic: "It's Never the Right Time"

The pain that comes to the Person of focus: Doing God's will is harder than fighting off satanic attacks. This pain is for people that were not even on Jesus' level. These were the people who He was sent to die for. The Father's will for Jesus is for the people beneath Him.

- I. **It's difficult – The struggle to give:** God is asking for all. Most of us are looking for something; what can I get out of this situation? Are you here at this church because of the Pastor, or maybe so you could get your own way? When you consider what Jesus had to endure, you have to put your own agenda away. In ministry, we flow in our gifts; the liberality of God's love makes us see that we are set up as a sacrifice. You are going through something and the people who said they would be with you let you down. When you move toward God's will for your life, it becomes difficult. There will come a point in your life where you realize the people who you depended upon so much will fall asleep on you. You have got to make up your mind that you will stick this out for God. You might have to tell those people, go on and sleep! There's something I must do for God. There's a sense that I must keep going. You know it's God's will when He's asking you to give up self. He's not asking you to do miracles, He's asking for *you*.
- II. **It's demanding – A living sacrifice:** Jesus had to feel the pain of doing God's will. You too will feel the pain of doing God's will. He's giving you away for a blessing. Jesus knew that His hour was near, and now the devil couldn't mess with His head anymore; He had already made His mind up.
- III. **It's deciding – It's never the right time:** There can never be a right time to do God's will. I've decided and made a commitment. If it's easy, it's not really a commitment. If it's easy, I really don't have to commit. It takes you going through some things for people to see the best in you. It's never a good time; because anytime you try to take a stand for God it's inconvenient and hard. But you have to decide, nevertheless, you will do God's will. There is a side of you that just won't give up and you don't even know why sometimes. There are always Gethsemanes in our lives, but it's not about flowing in your gift, it's about are you willing to die to yourself. It's not an easy thing to lead a ministry; it's hard to serve people who you know don't like you.

Conclusion: It's never the right time. We have to learn how to stick it out while living through the pain. It's about subjecting your flesh to a lot of pain – having to give up what you cannot live with anymore; giving up the things you want to hang on to. It's never a good time to die to yourself and do God's will. When you start moving toward God's will for your life, people can't hang with you. You must come to the point where you have to separate yourself from those who even have good intentions. It's about giving of my life. It's about the cross. The minute you make a decision to be the best God will have you to be, the devil is already defeated.

April 4, 2010: Resurrection Sunday Morning Worship

Scripture Reference: Luke 24:13-32: John 20:24-31

Topic: "Increasing Doubts and Growing Beliefs"

Introduction: We are convinced that He died, but our human reasoning struggles with, "He Lives." People commit to what is relevant. If people receive by faith that Jesus is risen, the doubt is decreased within.

Luke 24:15 – We see Jesus, Who still walks with men: We as believers must be a reflection of who Jesus is. What is Jesus like? Sit next to a believer and find out.

vs. 17-25 – Why are you so sad? : Jesus begins to talk to the two disciples walking on the Emmaus road and asks them the question. We must believe His word. He already told them He would be killed and then would rise again. Most of us get so carried away with “He died,” that we forget He was only doing what He came to do. So we try to explain the resurrection away. Even though He went to the scriptures, He still had to explain them. In His dying is the fulfillment of His promise.

vs. 32 – Jesus rekindles the fire in their hearts: Jesus talks to them and begins to warm their hearts with His words and the way He broke the bread. Just as their hearts begin to burn with remembrance of Him, He disappeared from before them. They became witnesses at that moment. Jesus asked them for something to eat and they remembered. Unless you remember the Resurrection of Jesus, you will not walk in “He Lives!” Get the message that He is *alive*.

John 20:21-31 – Thomas is absent at roll call: Thomas’ name means “twin,” thus the double-minded behavior. He struggled to believe in the face of the obvious evidence. Jesus asked Thomas to handle Him, to convince them it was indeed Him. Who is Jesus trying to convince today that He is alive?

vs. 25-27 – Jesus and friends bring evidence: Believe the surmounting evidence. Thomas who should be believing decides to sit and be alone for a while, struggling to believe. He felt like he needed to see for himself, but Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” - (vs. 29). Sometimes what we believe gets lost in our doubts. But we need to stand and believe that He rose.

vs. 28 – Thomas goes from the lowest belief to the highest confession of faith: When Thomas put his hands in Jesus’ hands, he said, “My Lord and my God!” He decided to worship and believe.

Conclusion: Regardless of the evidence, we believe He has risen. I don’t just go to church; I believe His word for myself. I praise His name because it’s personal.

Prevailing Thought: I know He died, but I also know that He rose again just like He said He would do; now I have victory. I believe!