

Segment 5: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – Fixing our Eyes on Jesus

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Racing to a BOLDER Faith
Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

Segment 5 of 5

Heb 12:1b-2 ...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus

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Once again, thanks for the opportunity to be with you, and welcome to the final Segment of "Racing to a BOLDER Faith" entitled "Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus".

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The Lord's Prayer

- Jesus told us to **command His Kingdom (rule) to come and will to be done** (Matt 6:10).
- The verbs "come" and "be" are in the imperative Greek tense, meaning a **command**.
- Christ was saying, "Command My Kingdom rule and will to come forth!"

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GIVE HIM FIFTEEN
AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN

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Before we pray the Lord's prayer this morning as has been our custom, let's first recall the teaching that Dutch Sheets gave us last week in his Give Him 15 podcast with respect to the wording in the Lord's Prayer. He said, "Jesus told us to **command His Kingdom (rule) to come and will to be done** (Matthew 6:10). *The verbs "come" and "be" are in the imperative Greek tense, meaning a **command**. *Christ was saying, "Command My kingdom rule and will to come forth!"

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The Lord's Prayer

- Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

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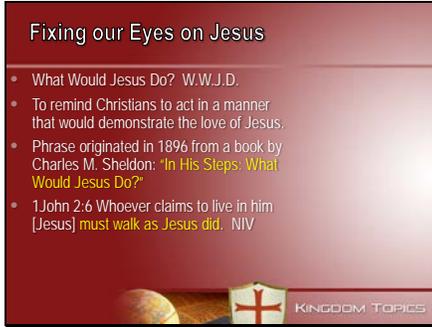
So then, let's pray the Lord's Prayer together as we start our class this morning. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen. Before we leave the Lord's Prayer, have any of you experienced anything unusual in your daily life during our spiritual warfare series over the past 9 weeks that you feel may have something to do with praying the Lord's Prayer regularly?

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Fixing our Eyes on Jesus

- What Would Jesus Do? W.W.J.D.
- To remind Christians to act in a manner that would demonstrate the love of Jesus.
- Phrase originated in 1896 from a book by Charles M. Sheldon: "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?"
- 1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him [Jesus] must walk as Jesus did. NIV



Now then, let's talk about **Fixing our Eyes on Jesus** as we greatly look forward to His imminent return. As you may recall, back in the 1990's

*the phrase "What would Jesus do?" was very popular in the U.S. The letters W.W.J.D. were placed on many bracelets and other items

*to remind Christians to act in a manner that would demonstrate the love of Jesus. By the way, until I looked up this phrase last week I did not realize that

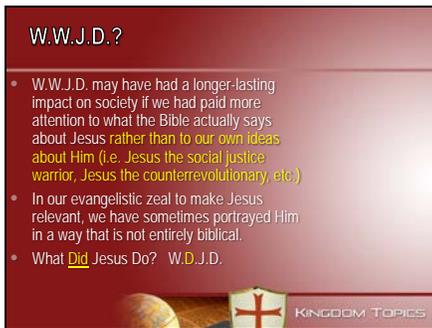
*the phrase originated in 1896 from a book by Charles M. Sheldon entitled, "**In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?**" Since then this book has sold over 50 million copies and ranks as one of the best-selling books of all time. And we should not be surprised, of course, because it is based on biblical teaching! As Saint John tells us:

*1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him [Jesus] **must walk as Jesus did.** NIV.

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W.W.J.D.?

- W.W.J.D. may have had a longer-lasting impact on society if we had paid more attention to what the Bible actually says about Jesus **rather than to our own ideas about Him** (i.e. Jesus the social justice warrior, Jesus the counterrevolutionary, etc.)
- In our evangelistic zeal to make Jesus relevant, we have sometimes portrayed Him in a way that is not entirely biblical.
- What **Did** Jesus Do? W.D.J.D.



In retrospect, without being critical of this phrase, I would suggest that

*W.W.J.D. may have had a longer-lasting impact on society if we had paid a more attention to what the Bible actually says about Jesus **rather than to our own ideas about Him – such as "Jesus the counter revolutionary", "Jesus the social justice warrior", etc.**

*Sometimes, in our evangelistic zeal to make Jesus culturally relevant, we have portrayed Jesus in a way that is not entirely biblical. So in order to make sure that we always have a good answer handy to the question "What Would Jesus Do", in this last Segment of Racing to a Bolder Faith we are going to focus on the question

*"What **DID** Jesus Do" – or W.D.J.D. – so that we can be sure that we are doing likewise.

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W.D.J.D. - God's Objective

- Luke 1:68-79 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has **redeemed [purchased from the enemy] his people.** 69 He has raised up a horn of **salvation [deliverance]** for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 **salvation [deliverance] from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—** 72 to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham.



To begin to answer the question What Did Jesus Do, let's remind ourselves of God's objective - Zechariah's prophecy:

*Luke 1:68-79 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has **redeemed [purchased from the enemy] his people.** 69 He has raised up a horn of **salvation [deliverance]** for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 **salvation [deliverance] from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—** 72 to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

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Deliverance from the Enemy

- Luke 1:74-77 **to rescue us from the hand of our enemies**, and to **enable** [Reconciliation with the Father] us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, 77 to give his people the knowledge of **salvation** [deliverance from the enemy] through the forgiveness of their sins..." NIV



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Luke 1:74-77 ...to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to **enable** [Reconciliation with the Father] us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, 77 to give his people the knowledge of **salvation** [deliverance from the enemy] through the forgiveness of their sins..." NIV Clearly, the focus of this prophecy is on deliverance from the enemy of God's people.

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The enemies in Zechariah's Prophecy

- Did Jesus defeat Rome? **No**.
- Did Jesus defeat satan? **Yes!**
- What was Zechariah's prophecy about? **Jesus defeating the spiritual enemies of the people of God for all time!**
- How was this victory achieved? Through the forgiveness of sins - **so that satan could no longer hold the people of God captive.**
- God's objective involved spiritual warfare.



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Sometimes people interpret the references to "enemies" as being physical enemies, but I simply ask:

*Did Jesus defeat Rome when He was on the earth? **No**.

*Did Jesus defeat satan when He was on the earth? **Yes**.

Satan is the spiritual enemy behind all the physical enemies of the people of God.

*So what, then, was Zechariah's prophecy about? It was about **Jesus defeating the spiritual enemies of the people of God for all time!**

*How was this victory achieved? Through the forgiveness of sins - so that satan could no longer hold the people of God captive.

*Simply stated, God's objective involved spiritual warfare!

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Jesus' confrontation with the enemy

- Jesus was **the last Adam** according to Paul (1 Cor. 15:45).
- Jesus possessed Adam's original authority over nature – authority that satan had been able to usurp from the first Adam.
- The kingdoms of men were still in bondage to satan and "owned" by him.
- Jesus didn't argue with satan about this "ownership".



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Zooming forward in biblical history about 30 years, after Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, Jesus went into the wilderness to a major confrontation with the enemy.

*As Jesus was the **last Adam** according to Paul (1 Cor. 15:45), it is clear that

*Jesus possessed Adam's original authority over nature – authority that satan had been able to usurp from the first Adam. However,

*because of sin, the kingdoms of men were still in bondage to satan and effectively "owned" by him.

*As we know, Jesus didn't argue with satan about this "ownership".

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W.D.J.D.?

- Luke 4:5-8 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to." 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"
- W.D.J.D.? Jesus said that everything would be done the Father's way!



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*So What Did Jesus Do here? W.D.J.D. He resisted the devil's easy way out of the coming conflict, and Jesus said that everything would be done the Father's way!

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Preparing for War

- The people of God had to be prepared.
- That started about 6 months or so before Jesus' baptism.
- John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus through Israel's corporate repentance and baptism.
- Jesus and His disciples also did some baptizing - at the same time as John!



Evidently, in order for the spiritual war to be engaged by Jesus at the right time,

*the people of God had to be prepared – and as we know, *that started about 6 months or so before Jesus' baptism. In the last Segment we spoke about the importance of *John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus through Israel's corporate repentance and baptism. What might be a bit of a surprise to many of us, however, is that the Gospel of John tells us that

*Jesus and His disciples also did some baptizing for a while – and at the same time as John!

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Baptizing - at the same time as John!

- John 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and **baptized**. NIV
- John 4:1-2 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, 2 although in fact it was **not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples**. NIV



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Nazareth - Battle Commissioning

- About 1-1½ years after Jesus' baptism (assuming His ministry was about 3 years in length).
- Jesus' **battle commissioning** as prophesied by Isaiah 61:1-2.
- Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.



Now, let's zoom ahead to Nazareth – the right time, apparently, in the Father's Plan to go to war against the enemy.

*About 1-1½ years after Jesus' baptism (assuming His ministry was about 3 years in length) we come to what I would suggest is one of the most exciting passages in the gospels: *Jesus' **battle commissioning** as prophesied by Isaiah 61:1-2. We pick up the story in

*Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.

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God's Orders

- 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor [i.e. humble, meek]. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."



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Luke 4:17-19 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him [should we think "by chance"?]. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor [i.e. humble, meek]. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners [of satan] and recovery of sight for the blind [blinded by sin and by satan], to release the oppressed [of satan], 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

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Declaration of War

- Luke 4:20-21 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." NIV
- W.D.J.D? He declared war against the enemy!
- There are no "deliverance events" recorded in the Bible prior to this Nazareth Declaration.




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Luke 4:20-21 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." NIV

*(W.D.J.D.) So What Did Jesus Do here? He declared war against the enemy! On that day, Jesus was commissioned by Isaiah's prophecy to engage in the battle to defeat satan on earth and rescue all of satan's prisoners, all those being oppressed, all and those being blinded by him. Please note that

*there are no "deliverance events" recorded in the Bible prior to this Nazareth Declaration. Shortly after Nazareth, however, the first shots are fired in Capernaum and the Gospel of Mark earnestly begins its coverage of the spiritual war.

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First unclean spirit(s) cast out

- Mark 1:21-28 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are— the Holy One of God."



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A new teaching with authority!

- Mark 1:25-28 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. ESV (also see Lk 4:31-37)



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Throughout remainder of ministry

- Matt 8:16-17 That [same] evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases." ESV (Mk 1:32-34, Lk 4:40-41)
- W.D.J.D. – and what did He continue to do?
- He cast the unclean spirits out of the people of God, and He healed them – both physically and spiritually.



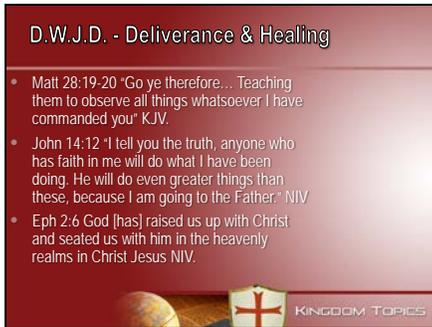
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*So what did Jesus do - WDJD – and what did He continue to do throughout the remainder of His earthly ministry?
*He cast the unclean spirits out of the people of God and He healed them – both physically and spiritually.

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D.W.J.D. - Deliverance & Healing

- Matt 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" KJV.
- John 14:12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." NIV
- Eph 2:6 God [has] raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus NIV.



So, clearly, if we are to be Doing What Jesus Did, we need to be learning how to do deliverance and healing – right? Earlier in our series we confirmed that we have the spiritual authority to do everything that Jesus did.

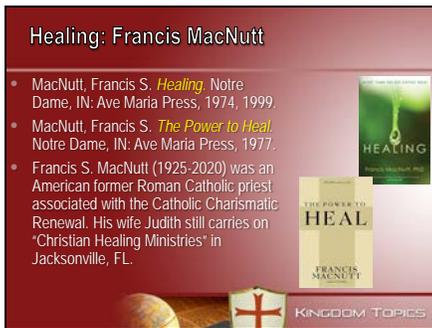
*Matt 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded yo" KJV. Jesus also said: John 14:12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." NIV and Paul confirms that

*Eph 2:6 God [has] raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus NIV.
So hopefully we are now absolutely clear on how to finish our race to a bolder faith.

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Healing: Francis MacNutt

- MacNutt, Francis S. *Healing*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974, 1999.
- MacNutt, Francis S. *The Power to Heal*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1977.
- Francis S. MacNutt (1925-2020) was an American former Roman Catholic priest associated with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. His wife Judith still carries on "Christian Healing Ministries" in Jacksonville, FL.



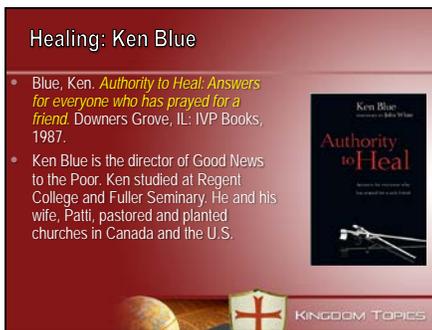
We've already talked deliverance resources in earlier segments, but we've not talked much about physical healing. Two classic books on healing have been written by Francis MacNutt entitled:

**Healing*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974, 1999 and
**The Power to Heal*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1977.
*Francis MacNutt (1925-2020) was an American former Roman Catholic priest associated with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. His wife Judith still carries on their outstanding healing ministry "Christian Healing Ministries" down in Jacksonville, FL and it is well worth checking out if interested.

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Healing: Ken Blue

- Blue, Ken. *Authority to Heal: Answers for everyone who has prayed for a friend*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1987.
- Ken Blue is the director of Good News to the Poor. Ken studied at Regent College and Fuller Seminary. He and his wife, Patti, pastored and planted churches in Canada and the U.S.



*Another classic book on healing is by Ken Blue entitled *Authority to Heal: Answers for everyone who has prayed for a friend*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1987.

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Physical healing through deliverance

- 40-50% of all of Jesus' physical healings in the gospels involved the casting out of one or more unclean spirits.
- The Bible clearly says that spirits are responsible for at least some of it – whatever the correct percentage may be.
- The "gift of healings" - 1Cor 12:5-11
- At times our deliverance prayers will also bring about physical healing!



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Before we leave the topics of deliverance and healing, ***some Bible teachers have suggested that 40-50% of all of Jesus' physical healings in the gospels involved the casting out of one or more unclean spirits.** These teachers do not suggest that **all** physical illness is caused by unclean spirits, of course, but the Bible clearly says that spirits are responsible for at least some of it – whatever the correct percentage may be. For those of us who may not feel that ***our spiritual gift happens to be "the gift of healings"** (healings IS plural by the way) from the list of gifts given by Paul in 1Cor 12:5-11, this is good news! Why? Well, now that we've taken this course, we can look forward to the fact that ***at times our deliverance prayers will also bring about physical healing** in those who we will be ministering to!

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Spiritual Gifts

- Prince, Derek. *The Gifts of the Spirit: Understanding and Receiving God's Supernatural Power in Your Life*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2007.
- Derek Prince (1915 – 2003) was an international Bible teacher, theologian, and pastor whose daily radio program, Derek Prince Legacy Radio, is broadcast around the world in various languages. (www.derekprince.org)



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By the way, an excellent book on the Gifts of the Spirit is entitled *The Gifts of the Spirit: Understanding and Receiving God's Supernatural Power in Your Life*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2007. I have of course suggested Derek Prince books to you before.

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Oppose What Jesus Did - O.W.J.D.?

- 1½ - 2 years after Jesus' baptism.
- In spite of the criticism and the threats to Jesus' life by the religious leadership, Jesus had not turned His back on the Jewish authorities.
- God is a God of law - He is not arbitrary or capricious. When He gives someone spiritual authority, it appears that only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can render the authority null and void.



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So far we've been taking about Doing What Jesus Did, but what happens to those who oppose what Jesus did O.W.J.D.? Let's fast forward to an extremely important moment in Jesus' spiritual battle with the enemy ***that occurred about 1½ - 2 years after Jesus' baptism.** ***In spite of the criticism and the threats to Jesus' life by the religious leadership up to this point, Jesus had not turned His back on the Jewish authorities.** Technically, by the way, I think that Jesus mostly hung out in geographical areas outside of their legal jurisdiction because ***God is a God of law - He is not arbitrary or capricious.** When He gives someone spiritual authority, it appears that only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can render the authority null and void.

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The work of satan!

- Matt 12:22-31 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." ESV
- God's spiritual leadership was completely confused about the enemy!



We pick up the sobering story in

*Matt 12:22-31 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." ESV. Amazing – they said Jesus' work was the work of satan, *and God's spiritual leadership was completely confused about the enemy!

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No - the Kingdom of God!

- Matt 12:25-28 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.



Continuing to read, Matt 12:25-28 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

- Matt 12:29-32 ...how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ESV
- Being confused about the enemy and his work has serious consequences.



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So what was going on here? Jesus was desperately fighting satan in the spiritual war of the ages – fighting to rescue all of mankind from the prisons of darkness, and the religious leadership was so out of touch and so clueless about what was really going on that they said that Jesus was in league with satan and they blasphemed the Holy Spirit! Amazing - this was a critical moment!

*As I'm sure we all realize, being confused about the enemy and his work has serious consequences.

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Not recognizing the enemy

- Jesus drastically changed His teaching.
- He kicked His discipleship training program into high gear.
- As Jesus did this, He referred to Isaiah's harsh prophecy in chapter 6:9-10
- RE: Eyes not seeing and ears not hearing!



At least two of the serious consequences of not recognizing the enemy took place on the very same day as this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

*Jesus drastically changed His teaching, and

*He kicked His discipleship training program into high gear – evidently to quickly replace the spiritual leadership that had just blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

*As Jesus did this, He referred to Isaiah's harsh prophecy in chapter 6:9-10

*regarding eyes not seeing and ears not hearing!

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Change in Jesus' Teaching: Parables

- Matt 13:1-3 **That same day** Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them **many things in parables**, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed... NIV
- Parable of the sower: Matt 13:3-23, Mark 4:3-25, Luke 8:5-18.
- A parable about the **'fruit production' of God's people**.



Let's read about the change in Jesus' teaching in
*Matt 13:1-4 **That same day** Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them **many things in parables**, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed... NIV
*By the way - please permit me a brief detour here - I would suggest that this parable about the sower is primarily
*a parable about the **fruit production of God's people** – fruit production that was not happening in the Jewish leadership – the leadership that had just blasphemed the Holy Spirit earlier in the day.

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The sower "fruit production" parable

- "Crop" and "grain" in this parable are actually the Greek word for "fruit" (NT2590).
- John the Baptist warned Israel about the **lack of fruit**, and Jesus cast the buyers and sellers out of the Court of the Gentiles - twice - because they were **interfering with "Kingdom fruit"**.
- Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree that was representative of Israel, and later said "Therefore I tell you that **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.**" (Matt 21:43)

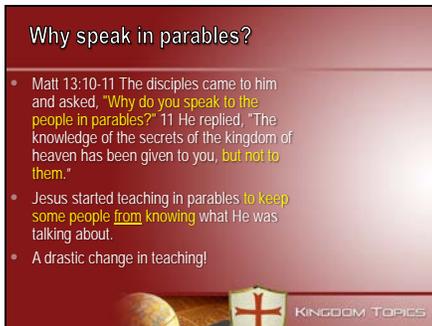


Notice that the English words
*"crop" and "grain" in this parable are actually the Greek word for "fruit" NT2590 - see our "fruit" word study to confirm this. As you may recall, we spoke about the production of fruit – or the lack thereof – back in Segments 2 & 3.
*John the Baptist of course warned Israel about the **lack of fruit**, and Jesus cast the buyers and sellers out of the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple - twice - because they were **interfering with "Kingdom fruit"**. Recall also that
*Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree that was representative of Israel, and later said "Therefore I tell you that **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.** (Matt 21:43 NIV).

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Why speak in parables?

- Matt 13:10-11 The disciples came to him and asked, "**Why do you speak to the people in parables?**" 11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, **but not to them.**"
- Jesus started teaching in parables **to keep some people from knowing** what He was talking about.
- A drastic change in teaching!



We don't have time to go into the details of this parable right now, but let me suggest to you that Jesus teaching up to this point did not use "parables" – or at least did not use them in the same way. As some confirmation of this, let me direct your attention to this curious exchange with the disciples later on the same day:
*Matt 13:10-17 The disciples came to him and asked, "**Why do you speak to the people in parables?**" 11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, **but not to them.**"
What? Did I just hear that right? Hey - I grew up in the church hearing that Jesus taught in parables because parables helped people understand what He was saying, but right here Matthew clearly says that
*Jesus started teaching in parables **to keep some people from knowing** what He was talking about. Wow - this is
*a drastic change in teaching!

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Why Jesus spoke in parables!

- Matt 13:12-14a Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 **This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.** 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:



Why? Well, let's continue to read this passage:

*Matt 13:12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 **This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.** 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

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Prophecy of Isaiah

- Matt 13:14b-15 "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 **For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.** Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them." (from Isa. 6:9-10)
- What caused the eyes that don't see and the ears that don't hear?



Matt 13:14b-15 "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 **For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.** Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' (from Isa. 6:9-10).

*What caused the eyes that don't see and the ears that don't hear?

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Eyes that don't see, ears that don't hear?

- Ezek 12:2 "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, **for they are a rebellious people.** NIV
- John 8:43-44 Why is my language not clear to you? Because **you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil,** and you want to carry out your father's desire. NIV



According to Ezekiel it was rebellion!

*Ezek 12:2 "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, **for they are a rebellious people.** NIV
Jesus said:

*John 8:43-44 Why is my language not clear to you? Because **you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil,** and you want to carry out your father's desire. NIV

Their confusion about the enemy was directly connected with their blindness and deafness. So what happened next?

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What happened next?

- For the first time, Jesus shared with His disciples **deep spiritual insights about the Kingdom of God – giving them a huge peek behind the "spiritual curtain".**
- Jesus rebuked the "demonic" storm on the lake.
- The Greek word "rebuked" (NT2008) is typically used in the gospels when Jesus was doing spiritual warfare.
- Keep Jesus from going to satan's stronghold!



Well, for the first time, Jesus shared with His disciples **deep spiritual insights about the Kingdom of God – giving them a huge peek behind the spiritual curtain with 5 amazing parables about the Kingdom of God.** He then went across the lake – still the same day by the way so it's no wonder that He fell asleep in the boat. After being roused by the disciples, of course

*Jesus rebuked the "demonic" storm on the lake. Why do I say demonic?

*The Greek word "rebuked" (NT2008) is typically used in the gospels when Jesus did spiritual warfare. This is not "proof" that the storm was demonic, of course, but it is highly suggestive. Satan may have sent the storm to try to *keep Jesus from going to satan's stronghold on the other side of the lake!

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Jesus healed the demoniac

- The **toughest case of demonization** that the disciples had seen up to that point!
- Perhaps **2000-6000 demons** in him (varying numbers of a Roman "Legion").
- Quite a day of spiritual warfare!
- Quite an **intense day of training** for the disciples!
- Apparently there was **no time to waste to get Jesus' new leadership up to speed.**



As we know, when Jesus arrived He dramatically healed the Geresene demoniac, the

*the **toughest case of demonization** that the disciples had seen up to that point

*perhaps **2000-6000 demons** in him (varying numbers of a Roman Legion).

*Quite a day of spiritual warfare, don't you think? And

*Quite an **intense day of training** for the disciples!

*Apparently there was **no time to waste to get Jesus' new leadership up to speed.**

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New leadership sent out...

- Matt 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and **gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.** NASU (also Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1).
- Jesus **never sent anyone out to do God's work without giving them authority over the spirit realm!**



Within a short time after Jesus got back to the other side of the lake, Jesus commissioned the new Kingdom leadership and sent them out on their own:

*Matt 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and **gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.**

NASU

*Please note that Jesus **never sent anyone out to do God's work without giving them authority over the spirit realm!**

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Did spiritual warfare stop in Acts?

- Acts 5:16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or **afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.** NASU
- Acts 19:11-12 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their **illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.** NIV



Did the spiritual warfare stop in Acts? Let's check:

*Acts 5:16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or **afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.** NASU

*Acts 19:11-12 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their **illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.** NIV

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In the job description of an Evangelist!

- Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8)
- Acts 8:6-8 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7 For in the case of **many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice;** and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there was much rejoicing in that city. NASU



In fact, since Philip is the only person that the Bible specifically calls an evangelist (Acts 21:8), it appears that deliverance ministry is in the job description of an evangelist!

*Acts 8:6-8 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7 For in the case of **many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice;** and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there was much rejoicing in that city. NASU

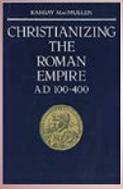
OK, so What about the early church?

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The Early Church

- Yale Professor Ramsay MacMullen - *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p27-28, 112
- "Jesus' authority over the fiercest infestations of satanic power, making them do whatever he wished by a mere word of command, he passed on to his disciples, with instructions to use it. They did. Exorcists by title became early established in the churches..."



Historians tell us that deliverance from evil spirits was the primary factor in the explosive growth of Christianity – and we spoke about that, as you may recall, back in Segment 3. *Professor Ramsay MacMullen says that "Jesus' authority over the fiercest infestations of satanic power, making them do whatever he wished by a mere word of command, he passed on to his disciples, with instructions to use it. They did. Exorcists by title became early established in the churches..." So, this spiritual war has not stopped!

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This spiritual war has not stopped!

- Our great privilege as the Ekklesia continues to be to **enforce the spiritual victory that Jesus achieved at the cross** against satan.
- If we don't do this, we are **not being fruitful!**
- If we are confused about who the enemy is or what he is doing, Jesus will **find other churches who will engage in spiritual warfare.**
- The primary growth in God's Ekklesia worldwide has been coming from 'Holy Spirit' oriented churches.



In fact,
*our great privilege as the Ekklesia continues to be to **enforce the spiritual victory that Jesus achieved at the cross** against satan.
*If we don't do this, we are **not being fruitful!** The sobering truth is
*that if we are confused about who the enemy is or what he is doing, Jesus will **find other churches who will engage in spiritual warfare.** As some of you know, church growth statistics have revealed that for many years now
*the primary growth in God's Ekklesia worldwide has been coming from Holy Spirit-oriented churches.

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If we don't D.W.J.D?

- 1 Cor 3:12-15 If any man builds on this foundation [Jesus] using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the **fire will test the quality of each man's work.** 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 **If it is burned up,** he will suffer loss; **he himself will be saved,** but only as one escaping through the flames. NIV



What will happen if we Don't Do What Jesus Did? Well, I believe that Paul tells us
*1 Cor 3:12-15 If any man builds on this foundation [Jesus] using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the **fire will test the quality of each man's work.** 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 **If it is burned up,** he will suffer loss; **he himself will be saved,** but only as one escaping through the flames. NIV
So it would seem that we won't lose our salvation... **but we may miss out on the reward** that Jesus really wants to give us in heaven.

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Let's fix our eyes on Jesus and D.W.J.D!

- A daily prayer template that puts together many of the things we've talked about.
- I am sharing this because I have found it to be helpful.
- "Daily Priestly Prayer" - 3 parts (see handout).
- Usually takes only 5-10 minutes.



KINGDOM TOPICS

So, let's Fix Our Eyes on Jesus and Do What Jesus Did! OK? Now, as a practical conclusion to our series, I'd like to offer you

*a daily prayer template that puts together many of the things that we've talked about. By sharing this with you I am not trying to say that I know how to pray better than anyone else. *I am just sharing this because I have found it to be helpful. I believe this prayer to be biblically correct, and I believe that the Lord has caused me to feel His good pleasure when I pray it each day, but please consider praying just the parts that you are comfortable praying, OK?

*I call this template "Daily Priestly Prayer" and it has 3 parts (please see handout). It might sound like a lot to do, *but it usually takes only 5-10 minutes – unless God brings something else to mind that I should be praying about.

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Part 1: Priestly Consecration

- a. Address ACCUSATIONS
- b. Address AGREEMENTS (Eph 2:6, 2 Cor 10:5b)
- c. Address CURSES (Gal 3:13-14)
- d. COMMAND the darkness to go
- e. ASK God for His protection



KINGDOM TOPICS

In Part 1: Priestly Consecration, recall that the Old Testament priests had to consecrate themselves before they could minister to anyone else, so my Daily Priestly Prayer starts *by confessing my sins to God and asking for the blood of Christ to wash me clean from any ACCUSATIONS of the Evil One. Then, knowing that my spirit is seated with Christ in heavenly places,

(REF: Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, NIV),

*...I declare "null and void" any areas of agreement that my body or soul may have made with the forces of darkness directly, indirectly, consciously, or unconsciously, and then pray that God would help me bring every thought captive to Christ.

(REF: 2 Cor 10:5b ...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. NIV).

*Finally I ask for the blood of Christ to be applied to any CURSES that might be upon me from either my own actions, inactions, or words - or those of my forbears - and then I declare that at the cross Jesus took my curses upon Himself and then gave me the blessings of Abraham in exchange!

(REF: Gal 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. NIV).

As I conclude part 1 of the template, I declare that Satan now has no accusation that he can make against me, no agreement with any part of me, and no curse upon me, *and so in Jesus' Name I COMMAND any forces of darkness to depart from me immediately and go where Jesus sends them. I then ask the Holy Spirit to fill any of the places in me or around me that have just been vacated by the darkness, *and ASK God for His protection.

Segment 5: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – Fixing our Eyes on Jesus

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Part 2: Priestly Intercession

- For Members of my family & those asking for, or open to, my prayers
- a. Cover ACCUSATIONS (John 20:23)
- b. Break AGREEMENTS (Numbers 30)
- c. Cancel CURSES (Numbers 30)
- d. COMMAND the darkness to go
- e. ASK God for His Will to be done in my priestly prayers
- f. ASK God to protect my family



In Part 2, Priestly Intercession, I turn my attention to my priestly role in Christ and I imagine myself putting on the linen priestly robes of righteous works that has been given to me by Jesus. Then, I imagine myself taking Jesus' blood from the altar with my hand and sprinkling it upon those in my family: my wife, my daughters, my son's-in-law, my mother (as eldest son because my father has passed away), my younger brother, my in-laws (as the oldest living male in the family), and anyone else that has accepted my mentoring or has asked me for prayer. With this blood of Christ,

*I ask God to COVER any of Satan's legal accusations against them here on earth. As you may recall, we spoke about a possible "two-dimensional forgiveness model" when we talked about John 20:23, but you certainly don't have to accept this idea.

(REF: John 20:23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." NIV). Obviously, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to quicken the individual heart, but when we study the role of the priest in the Bible, there seems to be a place for priestly interventions and family blessings of this type. In any event, to the best of my knowledge this is not an unbiblical model, and if anyone is interested, I'd be happy to try to explain if more fully. Returning to Part 2b of this Priestly Prayer, and deferring to God's Will in this process, by virtue of my authority as a Priest of the Most High God through Christ, and my earthly authority as husband, father, father-in-law, eldest son, oldest brother, mentor, etc.,

*I break (or render null and void) any AGREEMENTS that my loved ones may have made directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously with the forces of darkness, and then by the blood of Christ

*I cancel any CURSES that might be upon them - to the extent that it comports with the Father's Will.

*Then, in Jesus' Name, I COMMAND the forces of darkness to depart from my loved ones and go where Jesus sends them – once again, only to the extent that it comports with God's Will. In conclusion,

*I ASK God for His Will to be done in my priestly prayers, and finally

*I ASK God to protect my family.

Segment 5: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – Fixing our Eyes on Jesus

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Part 3: Specific Issue Prayers

- Focuses on specific issue prayers that pertain to myself or to others.
- "Journey Prayers" whenever a family member leaves the house!
- **Being in Christ we are Melchizedek Priests of THE MOST HIGH GOD!**

KINGDOM TOPICS

Finally, Part 3 of the prayer template

*focuses on Specific Issue Prayers that pertain to myself or to others. Although it may not coincide with your Priestly Prayer regimen each day, please don't forget to consider praying *what I call "Journey Prayers" over every member of your family every time they go out of the house to school, work, shopping, or to any other place.

*After all, being in Christ we are Melchizedek priests of THE MOST HIGH GOD!

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Racing to a BOLDER Faith
Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

Segment 5 of 5

Heb 12:1b-2 ...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus

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KINGDOM TOPICS

Well, that's it for Segment 5 – Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus - and it also concludes our Racing to a Bolder Faith series. I want to thank you for your courteous attention – we have covered lots of material in 9 weeks - much more than the usual Adult Sunday School class. Please know that I would love to continue any dialog with you by email or phone, and I would love ongoing prayer partners in spiritual warfare. As we mentioned at the start of this series, please be aware that satan will do everything that he can to get you to forget about this material. Please don't let him. I would encourage you to read over the class materials again that are available on the CCCC page of my website because review can help to cement it all together. Please let me know about any fresh insights that you might receive from this material - or from the suggested books. I would greatly appreciate hearing about it. So with that, let me conclude by saying that I greatly look forward to comparing notes with you when I see you all at the finish line in heaven!

Let's pray to close.

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5,589 words