

## Tribe - Quarter 1 / Week 1 - Course Introduction *and* Knowing God's Heart (part 1) - Glory

Theme: Understanding God's glory as the foundational passion of God in all He does

- 9AM - Greetings read 1 chronicles 17:16-27; prayer; logistical details (5 mins)
- 9:05 - Introductions (who are you, why are you here, hope for the course) (30 mins)
- 9:35 - Wim: Why are we here? (20 mins)
  - I am here because I have a call to invest in the lives of other ministers, to help them to grow and to be strong. My job is to help Ephesians 6:10-13 (standing firm) to be real in the lives of other ministers. I am not the Holy Spirit, but I am His servant. I go to bed and wake up thinking about other ministers.
  - The calling to be a disciple of Jesus and to make others into disciples of Jesus is not for the faint of heart. It is for the strong in heart. I want you to know who you are, to be strong, to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.
  - To be formed and shaped is essential in the life of a leader. Knowing who you are, what your purpose is, what your design is, why God made you - these are rocks in the soul of a ministry leader that keep him or her connected to God. It is only a matter of time before storms shake the foundations of your resolve.
- 9:55 - Wim: Syllabus overview (40 mins)
  - Vision / mission / values / the name "Tribe"
  - Expectations
  - Mentoring
  - Starting ministry / skill development
  - Calendar
  - Quarterly overview (including reading / writing assignments)
  - Final questions / thoughts
  - How to read and write
- BREAK
- 10:35 - Wim: Introduction of Quarter 1 central theme - Knowing and trusting God (his heart, his passions, his purposes) (10 mins)
- 10:45 - Wim: Introduction of Quarter 1 books (20 mins) -
  - Required: Either *Knowing God* - simple yet thorough overview of the character of God and our relationship with him; had a deep influence on me about 15 years ago
  - Required: Or *Desiring God* - worshipful overview of God's glory and the ways humans respond to God's glory
  - Optional: *On the Incarnation* - ancient book summarizing the theological vision for the Christology defended at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople: that Jesus is both fully divine and human
  - Optional: *United We Stand* - personal appeal to Christians to fight for unity; particularly important for ministry leaders; practical steps to pursue unity
  - Optional: *Celebration of Discipline* - summary of personal spiritual practices that help us to grow and connect with God and with others; more theoretical
- Discussion:
  - How have you historically thought of God?
  - What 3 words describe the God you grew up knowing?
  - How has that vision changed in the last 5-10 years (if at all)?
- 11:05 - Wim: Knowing God's Heart (part 1) - Glory (55 mins)
  - 11:05 - (10 mins) Made in God's image; God has a deep heart that is full of passion; understanding God's passions and learning to conform your passions to be aligned with His is the great challenge of the Christian life.
    - The variety of His passions (many different ones: justice, truth, mercy, faithfulness, beauty, love, His Son, His creation, His glory)
    - The prioritization of His passions (e.g. mercy and stewardship; mercy is a greater passion)
    - The depth of His passions (how deeply does He feel about His passions)
  - 11:15 - (5 mins) Defining glory
    - Description: Breathtaking and surpassing beauty
    - Purpose: To draw attention to the value and worth of something through being seen, heard, worshiped, enjoyed

- 11:20 - (30 mins) Bible (God's direct statements about His glory) (read 5 bolded passages)
  - Isaiah 43:1-7 - He made His people to make a statement about His glory
  - **Isaiah 42:8; 48:9-13** - He is jealous for His own glory
  - **Isaiah 66:18-19** - He wants His glory to be seen by all nations
  - **Exodus 14:4,17,18** - God's intention to make a visible statement about His glory through the Egyptians
  - **Psalms 67** - He wants to be known, seen, and worshiped
  - Jeremiah 2:11-13 - God is the glory of His people; intends to be prioritized
  - Daniel 4:28-37 - Trying to usurp the glory of God will result in swift punishment
  - John 8:50 - Jesus the man does not seek His own glory
  - John 12:28 - Jesus glorifies God
  - Philippians 2:5-11 and I Peter 5:6 - the pathway to glory is the pathway of Jesus: humility to the point of death
  - John 13:31-32; 17:1,5 - Jesus the Son of God asks God to glorify Himself in the Son
  - Revelation 15:3-4 - song of Moses sung by 7 angels in heaven
  - Isaiah 6:1-7 - Isaiah's stunning vision of God's glory and the effect it had on Isaiah (awareness of his personal sin and unworthiness)
  - **Exodus 33:12-34:9** - Moses show me your glory (esp. V.18-20, 6-7); notice:
    - Moses' passion to see God's glory,
    - God's delight in Moses,
    - God's insistence that no one else be present, and
    - the descriptors that come out of God's mouth about His glory, and the response of Moses.
    - That is the response God deserves from all of His creation. When God does not receive this response (though He waits for it with patience, and though He pleads with the earth to worship Him, and though He sends His own son to die in order to show how passionate He is about defending His own glory, though He sends His ambassadors to the four corners of the earth to make an appeal for Him), His wrath is poured out.
  - Psalm 19 - the heavens declare the glory of God
  - Psalm 115:1 - this is a good prayer
  - Isaiah 40:5
  - Habakkuk 2:14 - God's plan to spread the knowledge of His glory
- 11:50 - Conclusions (5 mins):
  - God's glory is his surpassing and breathtaking beauty.
  - God wants His glory to be seen, heard, understood, enjoyed, and magnified in ways that produce a response of worship.
  - God's design for human beings is that we magnify or testify to God's glory in our lives.
  - Read the Bible through this lens: there is a real God Who is seeking to get glory for Himself by being seen, known, heard, and worshiped.
- 11:55 - (5 mins) Longings for glory; story of my life
- Takeaway Questions:
  - Is God an egomaniac? Is He self-centered at your expense and my expense?
  - What is the difference between majesty and glory? (Today we have spoken of "glory"; one of the chapters to read for homework is on God's "majesty")
- Homework:
  - Submit Tribe application if you haven't already yet
  - Decide which books you will read this quarter
  - Do a Bible word search for the words "glory," "glorify," "majesty," and "honor" and read the passages you find
  - Reading for Week 1: Read Chapter 1 ("The Happiness of God") of *Desiring God* and Chapter 8 ("The Majesty of God") of *Knowing God*
  - Reading for Week 2: Read Chapters 14, 15, and 16 ("God the Judge," "The Wrath of God," and "Goodness and Severity") of *Knowing God*

## Tribe - Quarter 1 / Week 2 - Knowing God's Heart (part 2) - Righteousness, Justice, and Wrath

Theme: Understanding God's wrath and justice as necessary elements of His righteousness

- 9AM (15 mins) - Welcome; check-in; read I chronicles 29:10-19 and pray
- 9:15 (10 mins) Reminder of purpose / vision of Tribe, purpose / vision of Quarter 1, and concept of God's glory (last week)
  - Other reminders: I can be very forgetful about details
    - PLEASE remind me about things I've said that may be confusing
    - Please ask clarifying questions
    - Please challenge things that don't make sense
    - Please do not take what I say for granted; everyone has blind spots, including me. We all need the help of others to identify our blind spots, including me. I need you to help me see and understand areas where I may be making mistakes and saying things which are either untrue or unhelpful
  - ASKING QUESTIONS IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH, NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS
- 9:25 (60 mins)
  - Discuss last week's topic and readings (how many were able to complete the readings?):
    - Any thoughts about God's glory? Who can remember the definition of God's glory from last week?
    - (CAN SKIP) Majesty (chapter 8 in *Knowing God*) - Any impressions? How is God's majesty different and similar to God's glory?
    - Happiness of God (chapter 1 in *Desiring God*) - Any impressions? What do you think of Piper's bold statements about God's happiness and God's prioritization of Himself and His own glory in all of His plans and purposes?
  - Discuss this week's readings:
    - God the Judge (chapter 14 in *Knowing God*) -
      - Our culture is extremely sensitive to the concept of judgment. How do the 4 characteristics of God as judge seem to you?
      - What do you think about the retributive principle in this chapter?
    - The Wrath of God (chapter 15 in *Knowing God*) -
      - How have you historically thought about the idea of God's wrath?
      - How is God's wrath similar and different from human wrath?
      - When you think of your own life and heart, do you believe that you are deserving of wrath like this?
      - How does the section of the chapter about choosing this state (of receiving God's wrath) strike you? In your experience of others (and yourself) in your life, does it seem that when people get what they truly deserve, they have in a sense chosen what they are getting?
      - Read and discuss the Pink quote at the end of the chapter. How can maintaining a proper understanding of reverence for God's wrath motivate our daily living and fruit-bearing?
    - (CAN SKIP) Goodness and Severity (chapter 16 in *Knowing God*) -
      - What is Santa Claus theology and why does it cause the demise of real Christian faith and practice?
      - When you think of God's goodness, how has your thinking been similar to or different from the vision in the chapter section "God's Goodness," especially the paragraphs about the moral perfection and abundant generosity of God?
      - Take note of the suggested responses at the end of this chapter.
    - (CAN SKIP) The Jealous God (chapter 17 in *Knowing God*) -
      - Have you ever thought of the jealousy of God? Does jealousy seem to befit a holy God?
      - How does God's jealousy, rightly viewed, motivate us to be zealous?
  - 10:25 BREAK (10 mins)
  - 10:35 God's righteousness - summary and Bible support (15 mins)
    - **Righteousness is loving what God loves and hating what God hates; it is honoring the things that God has declared to be supremely valuable, most of all His own glory.**
    - **Psalm 36:5-9** - the beauty and wonder of God's righteousness
    - **Isaiah 5:8-25** (esp. 16, 20, and 21) - the righteousness of God values what is valuable and demands honesty about what is true
    - **Isaiah 32:17-20** - the effect of righteousness is blessing and peace
    - Micah 6:8 - summary of God's righteousness
    - Matthew 6:33 - God's righteousness is to be sought after as the highest priority
    - Romans 1:16-18 - God's righteousness is connected to His wrath and is revealed most fully in the Gospel
    - Romans 3:5 - our unrighteousness reveals God's righteousness
    - **Romans 3:21-26** - cosmic demonstration of God's righteousness in Christ's propitiation
    - 2 Corinthians 5:21 - we have become the righteousness of God

- 10:50 God's justice - summary and Bible support (15 mins)
  - **Godly justice is giving to a person what is rightfully theirs: punishment to whom punishment is due, restoration to whom restoration is due, and honor to whom honor is due.**
  - **Deuteronomy 16:18-20** - Justice is a deep value of God for people living together
  - **Deuteronomy 32:4** - God's ways are characterized by justice; justice is a core value of God's
  - Psalm 33:4-5 - God loves justice
  - Psalm 89:14 - Justice is foundational to God
  - **Isaiah 59:14-15** - justice and righteousness go together or are absent together
  - Isaiah 61:7-8 - God loves justice and will establish it in His restored Kingdom
  - Jeremiah 23:1-6 - Justice is a foundational promise of the coming Kingdom and King
  - Hosea 2:19 - Promise of God's marriage covenant with His people is a promise of justice
  - **Matthew 12:18-21** - Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise of justice
  - Psalm 7 - picture of God as supreme Judge of the earth and Administrator of all justice
- 11:05 God's wrath - summary and Bible support (20 mins)
  - **God's wrath is the just and required response to unrighteousness, commensurate with the crime. Wrath involves the measured, controlled, appropriate release and response of anger toward the one who has committed the crime of unrighteousness. It is a response that is deserved and demanded by unrighteousness. It is a response which God forewarns through teaching and law-giving so that those who receive God's wrath are without excuse.**
  - **Who is God's wrath directed toward? God's wrathful anger is directed toward unrepentant sinners (i.e. those who do not demonstrate humble and contrite hearts toward God). (The Bible also speaks of God's discipline of His children as *feeling like* the rod of His wrath, but in this case it is not anger but love which motivates God's discipline....)**
  - **Psalm 18:1-16** - God's wrath is fierce and on the side of God's people
  - **Exodus 22:21-24** - God's wrath burns against unjust oppressors
  - Exodus 32:10-11 - God's wrath burned against His people when they turned away from Him
  - **Psalm 85:1-7** - It is appropriate to acknowledge the presence of God's wrath and to appeal to Him for mercy in prayer
  - Psalm 90 - a prayer by Moses of submission to the God of faithfulness, wrath, and sustaining power
  - Jeremiah 10:10 - a declaration of God's sovereign rule and wrath over the nations
  - **Lamentations 3:1,22-27** - God sometimes lets his servants feel the rod of His wrath; never in judgment but always in loving discipline
  - Book of Ezekiel goes to great lengths with vivid imagery to describe the wrath of God
  - Nahum 1:2-3 - Description of God's wrath
  - Matthew 3:7; John 3:36 - Jesus spoke openly of coming wrath of God
  - Romans 1-5; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:5-6; I Thessalonians 1:9-10 - there is a wrath of God that is coming and which it is possible to be saved from, through belief in Christ and repentance of sins in His name
  - Revelation - full of visions of the coming wrath of God
- Takeaway questions:
  - How are God's righteousness, justice, and wrath connected? (see especially Romans 3:26)
  - How and when will the promise of justice be fulfilled? How does our answer to this question shape our current living and efforts?
  - Can you worship a God Who is full of wrath and also full of mercy?
- 11:45 Homework summary / close in prayer (10 mins)
  - Reflect on God's righteousness, justice, and wrath and how your historical ideas about them compare with our discussion today
  - Decide which books you will read this quarter
  - Do a Bible word search for the words "righteousness," "righteous," "justice," and "wrath" and read the passages you find
  - Reading for Week 3: Read Chapter 12 ("The Love of God") of *Knowing God* and Chapter 4 ("Love: The Labor of Christian Hedonism") of *Desiring God*; Chapter 3 ("Worship: The Feast of Christian Hedonism") of *Desiring God* and Appendix 4 ("How Then Shall we Fight for Joy?") of *Desiring God*
  - Pay fees for Q1 using the following link by 9/3/22:  
<https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/CityChurchofWoodbine/tribe>

## Tribe - Quarter 1 / Weeks 3 and 4 - Love / Joy and Sin

Theme: Understanding the deep and various loves of God

Themes: Acknowledging the deep quest for joy within each human, learning how to fight for joy, and understanding the nature, origin, and effects of sin in the world

- 9AM (15 mins) - Welcome; check-in; Heath devotional; PRAY
- 9:15 (10 mins) Reminder of purpose / vision of Tribe, purpose / vision of Quarter 1, where we are going the next 5 weeks in Quarter 1 (Joy / sin, Christology, prayer, and unity / missions)
- 9:25 Readings on God's love (20 mins)
  - Check-in from last week's discussion; any follow-up questions?
  - Discuss this week's readings:
    - **Packer's definition of love: "God's love is an exercise of his goodness toward individual sinners whereby, having identified himself with their welfare, he has given his Son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy him in a covenant relation."**<sup>1</sup>
      - Thoughts or questions about Packer's chapter on love?
    - **Piper's definitions of love: "Love is the overflow of joy in God which gladly meets the needs of others."**<sup>2</sup> and **"Love is finding your joy in the joy of another."**<sup>3</sup>
      - Personal appeal from my own life; have tasted of the finest pleasures in the world; they do not compare with the pleasures of knowing God and helping others, through love, to know Him.
- 9:45 God's love - (45 mins)
  - Bible passages to explore
    - **I Corinthians 13 - Paul's exaltation of the greatness of love**
    - **John 13:1-20; 31-35 - Jesus' example of love for the disciples**
    - **John 15:1-17 - new commandment of Jesus; greatest love is self-sacrificing**
    - **Deuteronomy 7:7-8 - God's unconditional love moves Him to save people**
    - Exodus 34:6-7 - God's love proclaimed to Moses when God showed him His glory
    - Psalm 25:6-10 - faithful steadfast love of God
    - Psalm 90:14 - satisfying steadfast love of God
    - Psalm 103:17-18 - the Fatherly love of God
    - So many other psalms....
    - So many prophetic passages....
    - 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4 - the love of a Christian leader
    - Hebrews 10:32-35 - the love of Christians for one another
    - Luke 6:35 - love for enemies
    - **John 8:1-11 - Jesus' love for a woman caught in adultery**
    - John 11:1-44 - Jesus' love for the family of Lazarus
    - Romans 5:1-5 - God's love given to His people
    - I John 3:1 - God's love for His children
    - I John 3:16-18 - God's love expressed for one another
    - I John 4:7-21 - God's love in our midst
    - Ephesians 2:4-7 - God's love demonstrated to His people
    - Ephesians 3:14-19 - the magnificence of God's love
    - Ephesians 5:25-33 - God's love shown through husbands
    - Philippians 2:1-4 - God's love shown in the church
    - Colossians 3:12-15 - the preserving and keeping nature of love for one another
    - I Peter 4:8 - the supremacy of love in the church
  - The problem with trying to define love (it's too massive to define with words; it is so deep and foundational that it has to be embodied, sung, demonstrated, and envisioned through poetry)

<sup>1</sup> *Knowing God*, chapter on Love, page 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Desiring God*, chapter on Love, page 119. Bible reference given for support is 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 8

<sup>3</sup> *Desiring God*, chapter on Love, page 123.



- **Romans 14:17 - the kingdom of God is about joy**
  - **2 Corinthians 1:24 - a good leader works to increase the joy of his disciples**
  - 2 Corinthians 8:1-2 - joy produces generosity
  - 2 Timothy 1:4 - it is appropriate to want more joy for oneself (Paul's motivation to see Timothy)
  - James 1:2-4 - it is appropriate to take joy in difficulty because of the expected result of righteousness that the difficulty will produce
  - 3 John 1:4 - making fruitful and faithful disciples brings great joy
  - Jude 1:24-25 - God preserves our joy
  - Proverbs 10:28; 12:20 - hope and peace bring joy
  - Proverbs 15:23 - carefully chosen words bring joy
  - Proverbs 17:22 - joy brings physical health
- 11:15 Sin - (45 mins)
  - How have you thought of sin in the past?
  - Bible passages to explore
    - Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3 - the sin of Adam
    - **Genesis 4:1-7 - the sin of Cain**
    - **Leviticus 4:2 - sin can be unintentional and hidden**
    - Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 - consequences for sin
    - **Deuteronomy 24:16 - sin has indirect consequences for those around us, but the punishment of death as a direct act of judgment from God is reserved for the individual sinner**
    - **Psalm 32:1-5 - sin produces shame which begs to be covered and cleaned**
    - Psalm 51:1-5 - sin was with us at conception
    - Psalm 139:23-24 - it is good to ask God to reveal our sin to us
    - Romans 3:9-11; 19-23 - all have sinned; the law reveals but does not overcome sin
    - I Corinthians 15:50-57 - sin is overcome by the victory of Christ over death
    - **James 5:13-16; I John 1:7-10 - our ongoing struggle with sin is overcome through confession**
    - I Peter 2:24 - Jesus suffered the punishment for our sin in his body
    - Romans 5-7 - how sin came, how sin was defeated, how sin still affects us
  - **What is sin? Sin is the force that works within humans and other created spirits (angels and other beings that are spiritually conscious) to move us to turn our attention, our desire, and our will away from God. It is disobedience to God and a disinterest in worshiping and honoring Him.**
  - **Where does sin come from? It originates in the hearts of spiritually conscious created beings.**
  - **What does sin produce? Sin produces death and shame and suffering.**
  - **Who does sin affect? Sin has massive spillover effects which affect God (producing anger and sadness and evoking wrath), other humans (producing broken relationships), and the world (producing disorder and chaos)**
  - **How does sin affect unbelievers? In addition to experiencing the earthly consequences of sin, unbelievers will suffer joyless and eternal death, shame, and suffering without rest**
  - **How does sin affect believers? Believers suffer the consequences of sin in ways that are felt in temporary and limited ways but which cannot ultimately shake our joy. It can still hurt us but no longer permanently pollute our souls with death**
  - **How does sin affect my relationship with God? God can't see my sin anymore (justification), for it has been removed as far as the East is from the west; my vision of God is regularly muddied by my ongoing struggle with sin (sanctification).**
  - **How can sin be overcome in my daily living? Confession and repentant faith (same response to sin as unbelievers are called to); spiritual disciplines (prevention of sin)**
  - **How will sin be overcome once and for all in our daily experience? The return of Christ will bring the final judgment and deliverance from the experience and effects of sin. (Revelation 21:1-4)**
- Takeaway questions:
  - Is the God of the New Testament more loving than the God of the Old Testament?
  - Are there different types of love that humans can exhibit?
  - Are there different loves in God?

- Where does joy come from?
- What comes first: worship or joy?
- What comes first: glory or joy?
- How can I grow in my knowledge of sin and fight against sin?
- 11:50 Homework summary / close in prayer (10 mins)
  - Reflect on God's love and how your historical ideas about it compare with our discussion today
  - Do a Bible word search for the words "love," "joy," "rejoice," "transgression," "iniquity," and "sin" and read the passages you find
  - Begin working on your Q1 writing assignments
  - Be sure to connect with mentors and to open your hearts completely to them; they are trustworthy and will engage with you!
  - If you haven't already, pay fees for Q1 using the following link by 10/3/23:  
<https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/CityChurchofWoodbine/tribe>
  - Reflect on joy and sin and how your historical ideas about them compare with our discussion today
  - Reading for Week 5: finish first Quarter 1 book (either *Desiring God* or *Knowing God*)

## Tribe - Quarter 1 / Week 5 - Unity and Missions

Themes:

- Understanding and promoting God's passion for the unity of His people
- Understanding the missionary heart of God

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- 9AM (15 mins) - Welcome; check-in; PRAY
- 9:15 (10 mins):
  - Follow-up thoughts and questions about Christology from last week's session?
- 9:25 (65 mins) - God's vision for the unity of His people
  - **Jesus' passion for unity - John 17:20-23**
  - Paul's passion for unity:
    - I Corinthians 1-4 - avoiding factions based on different leaders
    - I Corinthians 12 - avoiding factions based on different gifts
    - **Ephesians 4:1-7 - the basis of our unity**
  - **Philippians 1:27-2:4 - a picture of unity**
  - **Philippians 4:2-3; 2 Corinthians 13:11 - an exhortation to agree**
  - **I Peter 3:8 - a mindset of unity**
  - Matthew 18:19-20 - there is power in agreement
  - **What is unity?** "Christian unity is a shared commitment to the following truths about Jesus Christ:
    - **Jesus Christ is the supremely valuable God-Man that is infinitely beautiful and infinitely necessary for every single human being to have the deepest desires of her heart satisfied.**
    - **Human beings cannot experience satisfaction of the deepest desires of their hearts apart from Jesus because every human being has a deep and pervasive problem with herself called sin which cannot be overcome apart from accepting, trusting in, and treasuring the work of Jesus on her behalf.**
    - **Accepting, trusting in, and treasuring Jesus includes agreeing that Jesus is worth giving my life and everything I own away for His sake.**
      - **This unity is characterized by trust, shared resources, interdependent welfare, and mutual understanding of the truths summarized above.**<sup>1</sup>
      - **This unity is undergirded by a real "ontological" reality of interconnectedness made possible and sustained by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in us.**
  - **What is necessary (prerequisite) for unity?** The true foundation of unity is not perfect theological and doctrinal alignment; rather, it is a shared and total commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ characterized by love and trust in Him and one another.
  - **What is agreement?** Agreement is saying and deciding the same things. It is enabled by love and trust and empowered by humility and submission. It does not require equivalent understanding or insight, though those should be sought for by prayer, patient listening, and gentle communication. God is the one who provides and withholds agreement, but His heart is always for us to seek agreement, even if He sometimes does not bring it to completion. It is possible to stay unified without agreement.
  - **Unity makes us stick together; agreement helps us act together.**
  - **Without unity, we cannot take advantage of each other's gifts in the ways we were meant to.**
  - **Without agreement, we will struggle to make progress as a group in the practical challenges we face in pursuing our shared commitments.**
  - **A practical vision for unity (i.e. how to pursue agreement): The Unity Principle:** "If two followers of Jesus are presented with a decision to make that involves two or more options, each should carefully assess whether choosing any of the options would require direct disobedience to explicit teaching of the Bible that has been upheld in the New Testament. Such options should not

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<sup>1</sup> *United We Stand*, pages 13-14.

be chosen. All remaining options should be chosen by considering the interests of the other as more significant than one's own interests."<sup>2</sup>

- **Personal example - baptizing our children**
- **Warning against using labels and categories which are not in the Bible (e.g. reformed, Baptist, charismatic, Presbyterian, cessationist, etc.). Labels and categories can be helpful in describing our history, but they are also lightning rods for division which are used by the kingdom of darkness to great effect in causing disunity in the church. Let us use non-Biblical (i.e. "not in the Bible") labels and categories sparingly and only when necessary for providing clarity.**
- **Excerpts from Ignatius**
  - **Ephesians (p.54-56)**
  - **Magnesians (p.87, p.96)**
  - **Philadelphians (p.134-135, 137, 144-145)**
- 10:30 (10 mins) - BREAK
- 10:40 (70 mins) - God's mission in the world (understood first through the covenants God made with his people)
  - **Genesis 12:1-3 - Abrahamic covenant (provide land, build family, bless you, bless all families through you)**
  - Genesis 26:2-5 - Isaac covenant (repeat of Abrahamic covenant)
  - Genesis 28:13-15 - Jacobic covenant (repeat of Abrahamic covenant)
  - Exodus 19:4-6 - Mosaic covenant (special people as God's possession)
  - 2 Samuel 7:5-16 - Davidic covenant (establish the throne of David forever)
  - **Psalm 67 - let the nations be glad and sing for joy**
  - **Daniel 7:13-14 - the Son of Man is given a global kingdom which includes people from all nations**
  - Jeremiah 31:31-34 - new covenant with Israel in the heart
  - **Isaiah 9:6-7 - the ruler of the new kingdom; Luke 1:30-33**
  - Isaiah 65:17-25 - new heavens and new earth
  - Kingdom parables and teachings of Jesus - His goal was to bring His Kingdom to earth and to reveal it in the hearts and lives of people ("the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." - Luke 17:21); he taught us to pray for the Kingdom to come
  - John 3:3-5 - the kingdom of God is only visible to those who are reborn
  - John 18:33-36 - the kingdom of Jesus is distinctly different from this world, though still connected and familiar
  - **Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8 - the Great Commission given to the disciples**
  - Acts 10:34-43 - salvation is offered to all, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles
  - Hebrews 10:32-39 - a better possession awaits us
  - Hebrews 11:13-16 - we are awaiting a new country, a new city
  - Revelation 21:1-8; 21:22-2:5 - the new Jerusalem awaits
  - Revelation 5:9; Revelation 7:9 - who will be in the new Jerusalem
  - **Important words: covenant, people, land, family / nation / language / tribe, kingdom, heaven**
  - **What is a mission? A mission is a stated objective that is being consciously pursued through specific means or strategies. It is supported or fueled by a vision, which is a desired state of being.**
  - **What is God's mission in the world? God's mission in the world is His intention to reveal Himself in a saving, transforming, delivering, healing, restoring, and gladdening way to people from all nations, languages, and tribes; first to the Jews, and then to people from all other nations. It is fueled by His vision to be glorified by all peoples.**
  - **What is the world? The world, in a spiritually neutral<sup>3</sup> sense, is the battleground in which the kingdom of heaven and kingdom of darkness wage war for supremacy in the hearts of humans. This world has foretastes of heaven and foretastes of hell. The kingdom of darkness has been given dominion in the world in a limited and temporary sense.**

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<sup>2</sup> *United We Stand*, page 41.

<sup>3</sup> In some instances in the Bible, the "world" refers to the kingdom of darkness. In other instances, it refers to the global present age and reality on the earth in which we live. In this sense, the world is fundamentally good (created good by God) but tarnished by sin. The phrase "spiritually neutral" refers to this latter sense of the word "world" as still containing echoes of God's goodness but no longer perfect or free from corruption.

- ***What is a missionary?*** Simply and generally speaking, a missionary is someone who is working to achieve the mission. In this sense, all Christians are missionaries. Historically a Christian missionary is a person who is sent to cross cultures, languages, and lands (or some combination of these) in order to accomplish the mission of God and share the message of God with a different people. (This is in contrast with an evangelist, who shares the message of God with his own people.)
- **We must learn to see God's plan for the world as a single, intentional plan that is rooted in God's purposes before the foundation of the world and which is revealed consciously, slowly over many generations, and which is headed toward a final culmination in time and space.**
- **We must understand the role of human beings, both as missionaries and as the focus of missions. Humans are not the sole focus of missions (that is, God is interested in saving more than just human beings; He is intent on reconciling all things to Himself and in remaking the heavens and the earth), but humans are the primary focus of missions.**
- **We must remember that missions is not just about a message and it is not just about an action. It requires both word and deed; speaking and embodiment. Truth reaches its apex when it is demonstrated.**
- Takeaway questions:
  - What is God's vision for unity in the body of Christ?
  - What is your role in promoting unity in the body of Christ?
  - When may it be helpful to agree to disagree? When may it be harmful?
  - How does the cultural lens you bring to the discussion of unity (e.g. American culture, Protestant culture, etc.) affect how you hear the exhortations from Ignatius?
  - What is the mission of God?
  - What is your role in the mission of God?
  - Are all people called by God to be missionaries?
  - Was the Great Commission given only to the disciples? Does it apply also for Christians today?
- 11:50 Homework summary / close in prayer (10 mins)
  - Reflect on the takeaway questions from today.
  - Read Chapter 6 ("Prayer: The Power of Christian Hedonism") in Piper's *Desiring God*.
  - Reflect on how you have historically thought of and practiced prayer, both individually and corporately; come prepared to share with others next week.
  - Finish all reading and writing assignments for Quarter 1, if not finished.
  - Pay Q1 fees (\$300) by September 3 if possible; can use the following link: <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/CityChurchofWoodbine/tribe>

## Tribe - Quarter 1 / Week 6 - Christology

Theme: Understanding the centrality of Jesus Christ in all reality; understanding historical and theological controversies about Jesus Christ

- 9AM (15 mins) - Welcome; check-in; PRAY
- 9:15 (10 mins) Reminder of purpose / vision of Quarter 1, where we are going today (importance of Christology; distinguishes Christianity from its cousins Judaism and Islam)
  - Who is Jesus?
  - How has He shaped history and the universe and eternity?
  - Who is the Messiah of the OT? How did the prophets speak of the Messiah?
  - How did Jesus speak of Himself?
  - How did the apostles speak of Jesus?
  - How does Jesus fit into our faith and understanding today?
  - How should we speak of Him to others?
- Bible overview 9:25 (145 mins, including 10 minute break in the middle)
  - Check-in from last week's discussion about joy / sin (or other topics); any follow-up questions?
    - DISCUSS sin definitions topics from last week (up to 50 minutes until 10:15AM)
  - Discuss Christological themes: Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and savior of mankind and the world:
    - **John 1:1-18 - Jesus is God, Creator, life, light, man, grace and truth**
    - John 5:30-47 - Obedient Servant of God; foretold by John the Baptist; Giver of life; written of by Moses
    - John - I am sayings
      - "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35,41,48-51), satisfying spiritual hunger
      - "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), penetrating spiritual darkness
      - "I am the door" (John 10:7,9), leading to spir- itual life and away from spiritual danger
      - "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25-26), delivering from spiritual death
      - "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11,14-15), leading His people to safe and good places
      - "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), offering the only path to understanding and transcendence
      - "I am the true vine" (John 15:1,5), filling human spiritual emptiness
    - John 10:30 - One with God
    - **Paul -**
      - **Colossians 1:11-20; 2:1-3 - Ruler and Creator of all things; Head of the church; Reconciler of all things; Storehouse of all wisdom and knowledge**
      - **Philippians 2:1-11 - Rightful Ruler to whom all will bow; servant Leader**
    - **Moses - Deuteronomy 18:15-19; 34:10-12 (Acts 3:11-26 - Peter said Jesus was the successor of Moses; both were prophets, redeemers, mediators, and intercessors)<sup>1</sup>**
    - David - Messianic psalms (selection): Psalm 2 (Son / King), 22 (suffering servant), 72 (king)
    - Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7 - coming child Ruler and King
    - Isaiah Servant Songs - humble, meek, redeemer, Messiah, royal, chosen (written 700 years before Jesus Christ was born):
      - **Isaiah 42:1-9 - introduction to the Servant of the Lord**
      - Isaiah 49:1-13 - the ruling and reigning Servant of the Lord, redeemer of all
      - **Isaiah 50:4-11 - vindicated and obedient Servant of the Lord**
      - Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - Suffering Servant; Atonement for sins of God's people
    - Daniel 7:9-14 - Son of Man
    - Micah 5:2-5 - coming Ruler and Deliverer from Bethlehem
    - Hosea 11:1 - Messiah would spend time in Egypt

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<sup>1</sup> See

<https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/genesis-deuteronomy/deut-1815-why-does-peter-apply-t-his-passage-to-jesus/> for fuller discussion.

- Many other OT prophecies (see link for more examples: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2014/11/44-Prophecies-Jesus-Christ-Fulfilled.pdf>)
- The Gospels (especially Matthew) very clearly demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold by Moses, David, and the prophets
- Peter - Mark 8:27-30 - Messiah
- (The book of Hebrews is highly “Christocentric” - all about the finality and sufficiency of Christ’s work as the culmination of God’s revelation to the Jews and all who believe in Yahweh)
- **Hebrews 1 - Creator, Ruler, Sustainer of the universe**
- Hebrews 2 - Suffering Servant and empathetic Priest
- Hebrews 3:1-6; 4:14-5:10 - Apostle, High Priest, Son of God, Ruler of God’s house
- Hebrews 7:11-10:18 - Perfect and final Sacrifice; Guarantor and Mediator of New and final Covenant
- Revelation 1, 5, and 21:22-22:21 - total lordship of Jesus over all history and eternity; sacrificial Lamb; final Judge
- Summary statements about Jesus:
  - ***Who is Jesus? Jesus Christ is God and man. He is Creator of and Ruler over the universe. He is the promised Messiah, Servant, Redeemer, and Savior of mankind. He is the Mediator and Priest between God and man. He is the embodiment of God’s glory and character. He is the beginning and the end of all things.***
  - ***How has He shaped history and the universe and eternity? One with God, He has planned the history of the world with God in such a way as to glorify the mercy, justice, grace, and love of God in His own eternal and earthly existence.***
  - ***Who is the Messiah of the OT? How did the prophets speak of the Messiah? Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, the One promised who would fulfill all of the promises of God for His people (shalom, peace, a home, a family, a name, honor, redemption, restoration, well-being, healing, glory, and everlasting life).***
  - ***How did Jesus speak of Himself? When appropriate, He confirmed His identity as Messiah and received the worship of men.<sup>2</sup>***
  - ***How did the apostles speak of Jesus? They confirmed His identity as God, man, and Messiah.***
  - ***How does Jesus fit into our faith and understanding today? He is the foundation and the cornerstone. Learning, teaching, understanding, celebrating, defending, emulating (His “communicable” attributes), and sharing His identity should be our primary ambitions as His disciples.***
  - ***How should we speak of Him to others? Because of the exclusivity of the community of God’s people, accessible only through Jesus Christ (“I am the way, the truth, and the life”), with a sense of urgency, eagerness, and compassion, we should tell others about Him and invite them to know and follow Him as we do.***
- **A note about creeds.** Christian creeds and confessions emerge from the activity we are doing now. In fact, my statements above are the early beginnings of a creed. It is a normal part of the formation of religious communities to make statements of belief as a foundation of understanding and unity. Next week we will examine some of the creeds which emerged in the early Christian church in the early centuries following the life of Jesus to affirm beliefs about Him as responses to disputes or controversies about His identity.
  - Here is a creed-like statement I made in my book about unity (which we will read later in the quarter) about the least common denominator for identification as Christian:
 

*Christian unity is a shared commitment to the following truths about Jesus Christ:*

    - *Jesus Christ is the supremely valuable God-Man that is infinitely beautiful and infinitely necessary for every single human being to have the deepest desires of his heart satisfied.*

<sup>2</sup> See Matthew 2:11, 14:31-33, 28:8-10, 28:16-20, Luke 24:50-53, John 9:35-38, Revelation 5:13-14, 22:3 for examples in which Jesus received the worship of men; in contrast, see other examples in which men who were worshiped quickly deflected the worship to God: Acts 14:8-18, Revelation 19:10, and Revelation 22:8-9.

- *Human beings cannot experience satisfaction of the deepest desires of their hearts apart from Jesus because every human being has a deep and pervasive problem with himself called sin which cannot be overcome apart from accepting, trusting in, and treasuring the work of Jesus on his behalf.*
  - *Accepting, trusting in, and treasuring Jesus includes agreeing that Jesus is worth giving my life and everything I own away for His sake. This unity is characterized by trust, shared resources, interdependent welfare, and mutual understanding of the truths summarized above.*<sup>3</sup>
- Christological controversies overview
  - Purpose of this session is not for you to become exhaustive church historians or to call you into academia. Rather, ***the purpose of this session is to help you to be wise about the hearts of men and your own hearts.*** There is a reason Jesus Christ is incessantly attacked. It is because He is the apex of our faith. C.S. Lewis said that Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. He was right. We have to conclude one of those three; if we don't accept Him as Lord, we have to make an alternative conclusion about His claims which removes the obligation we have to follow and worship and surrender to Him.
  - **The primary source of controversy about Jesus Christ since His death and resurrection and ascension is His identity and nature.** The controversies started during His ministry; His disciples, the crowds, the religious leaders, the Jewish government, and the Roman rulers all wanted to understand Him so that they could either control Him, stop Him, or join Him. Who was He?
  - **The solid ground that He stood on and which His disciples and followers who accept "orthodox"<sup>4</sup> teachings about Jesus is that Jesus is fully God and fully human.** Nearly all Christological controversy attacks one of His two natures.
  - Controversies:
    - **Ebionism** (1st and 2nd centuries): denied virgin birth and deity of Christ; Christ was simply a wise teacher
    - **Docetism** (1st and 2nd centuries): denied full humanity of Christ
    - **Gnosticism** (2nd century): Gospel of Thomas; Marcion and others; the material world is evil; Christ came as a spiritual savior to deliver from a corrupt material world through knowledge; OT God is evil and created the material world evil; NT Savior (Jesus) is good and saves us from the evil material world; Irenaeus and Tertullian defended Christianity against Marcion and Gnostic beliefs by demonstrating that the OT and NT are unified and that God of OT and NT is unchanging.
    - **Dynamic monarchianism** (2nd and 3rd centuries): Jesus, a virtuous man, became God's Son through adoption.
    - **Modalistic monarchianism** (2nd and 3rd centuries): The Father, Son, and Spirit are not distinct persons but rather different expressions of the same God. Tertullian developed trinitarian language in response to this controversy: "three persons 'not in condition, but in degree, not in substance, but in form, not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and one condition, and of one power'".....
    - **Arianism** (4th century): Jesus was a created being, not equal with God the Father. Resolved at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. Nicene Creed was produced.
    - **Apollinarianism** (4th century): Response to Arianism; Jesus was fully God and did not have a human soul. Resolved at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381.
    - **Nestorianism** (5th century): Christ was 2 persons, one as God and one as man. Cyril of Alexandria responded to the Nestorian controversies, affirming the single personhood of Jesus.
    - **Eutychianism** (5th century): said Jesus had only one nature rather than two (divine and human); resolved at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 (*henophysitism - 2 natures; "hypostatic union"*) and clarified at the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553 with the following statements about the nature of Jesus Christ:

<sup>3</sup> *United We Stand*, page 13

<sup>4</sup> Google defines "orthodox" as "authorized or generally accepted theory, doctrine, or practice." Orthodox Christian teaching has been tested, evaluated, and accepted by a wide group of Christians across cultures, generations, and church traditions.

- *Christ was personal, as a man, by virtue of the union of human nature in the person of the eternal Son*
  - *The incarnation is a dynamic act on the part of the person of the Son, but in triune relationship and action*
  - *Christ's human nature was the same as any other human in its unfallen condition, except independent personal existence apart from the Son*
  - *The Son is able to live a fully human and divine life*
  - *The imago dei underpins the concept of henophysitism.*
  - (Church history note: The Oriental Orthodox Church split from the Eastern Orthodox Church at the Council of Chalcedon; the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church affirmed henophysitism, but the Oriental Orthodox Church affirmed *miaphysitism*, which says Jesus had one nature that is both fully divine and human. The Oriental Orthodox Church includes the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, of which almost all Egyptian immigrants in Nashville have come from. Note that Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestants have historically all agreed about the nature of Jesus as having two natures, one human and one divine.)
  - Read and discuss the last paragraph in the Gospel Coalition article referenced below (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/christological-controversies-in-the-early-church/>), section entitled "Considerations for Evangelical Christians."
  - **Listen to the episode from "Ask Pastor John" about doctrinal controversy:** <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/controversy-is-essential-and-deadly>
  - Read Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds below.
  - Time permitting, discuss Takeaway questions below.
- Creeds:
- Nicene Creed (reaffirmed and expanded at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381):

*We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.*

*And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.*

- Chalcedonian Creed (Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451):

*We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus*

*Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.*<sup>5</sup>

- **Wim's summary: We should defend the Lordship and humanity of Christ relentlessly without getting needlessly caught up in semantic or definitional battles. We should introduce nuance when necessary to avoid being overly simplistic; we should introduce simplicity when necessary to avoid confusion and unnecessary complexity. In all cases, we should uphold the distinctiveness of Jesus Christ as fully God, fully man, Who lived, died, and rose for the forgiveness and remission of our sins and the provision of our eternal life and happiness. We should prioritize Bible words and definitions as much as possible. We should be slow to introduce new words and quick to affirm historical ones, always seeking to uphold the unity of the body in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3), which true Christology always does, though not without cost and casualty.**
- Resources used to develop today's session:
  - Gospel Coalition article "Christological Controversies in the Early Church" (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/christological-controversies-in-the-early-church/>)
  - Wikipedia article entitled "Christology" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology>)
- Takeaway questions:
  - How have you historically thought about Jesus?
  - How do you think of Jesus today?
  - Does it matter whether Jesus has 1 or 2 natures?
  - What do you think about how the councils dealt with the Christological controversies?
  - What do you think about the split of the Oriental Orthodox Church from the Eastern Orthodox Church in A.D. 451?
  - How do you see the Christological controversies repeating themselves in Christian traditions and other religions today (mainstream Christian denominations, Judaism, Islam, etc.)?
  - What traps can we be vigilant against in these kinds of controversies? (2 Timothy 2:14, 3:7, 4:2, Titus 3:9-11)
  - Our generation is losing the value and acceptance of history itself. How could this pose a threat to Christianity?
- 11:50 Homework summary / close in prayer (10 mins)
  - Study the notes and reflect on the takeaway questions from today.
  - Buy Tom Hilpert's *Who Cares About the Bible* and begin reading
  - Optional: Read *United We Stand* (Wim Codington)
  - Work on the first written assignment (your ideas and resolutions about God).
  - Admin reminders:
    - Both Q1 writing assignments due by last class in Q1 (September 3); I will provide you with feedback on your writing assignments so that you can work on improving your writing, but there will be no grades.... Work ahead now to make sure you have time to complete the assignments

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theopedia.com/chalcedonian-creed>