



BIG IDEAS

...for ordinary people

**A Guide to Personal Bible Study
Covenant Presbyterian Church**

Fall 2021

During the Fall of 2021, we will take nine weeks to study nine, big, theological ideas from Scripture. These ideas are not everything there is to say about Christianity. But these nine do serve as “distinctives” for us at Covenant. I have, in one form or another, rehearsed these themes over and over again in our teaching and preaching. The purpose of this series is to make explicit what might sometimes be implicit in our life together.

But the series is about more than emphasizing a certain set of themes. I believe these ideas are really important. I believe they will change your life. And although they require some study and wrestling to understand, these are not ideas for scholars. They are for ordinary people. These are ideas that will change your life in the every day. They will change the way you see your faith, the way you spend your money, the way you argue with your spouse, and the way you view the purpose of your life. These are big ideas for ordinary people.

During these nine weeks, we will preach through each idea on Sunday. I hope you will make the effort to be with us in worship to receive the teaching. We will also have a corresponding small group Bible study during the week following. I hope you will consider joining a small group for these nine weeks. Nothing can replace digging into God’s Word with other people. Finally, you will have the opportunity to engage in personal Bible study on these subjects. This study guide is designed for you to personally engage the Scriptures and the Lord.

The study guide is designed to be used in a certain fashion. Day 1 should be done before worship on Sunday. Day 1 of each week will prepare you to know and engage the teaching of God’s Word. Day 2 and 3 should be done after worship, but before your small group gathering. You and your group will benefit greatly from this pre-work.

Each day is intended to take you around 15 minutes. If, in the course of your study, you have any questions or matters you don’t understand, bring them to your small group for discussion. If you have further questions, please contact me! I would love to talk about Biblical matters.

As always, we are under grace and not law. Sometimes you may not have finished your personal study before small group. Do not let that keep you from going to the group. Show up anyway! These studies are not chores or spiritual tasks to check off, but instead an opportunity to engage God through his Word. I hope a bit of study, teaching, group work, and prayer will shape your heart and engage your soul. Might a deeper walk with Jesus be our purpose here.

With you in Christ,

Alec

WEEK ONE
It's About God

Day 1 Study: God's Sovereignty

Psalm 93:1-5

1 The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. 2 Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. 3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. 4 Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty!

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Psalm 135:6

Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Questions:

- 1) Describe what it means to be robed in majesty or belted with strength (Psalm 93).

- 2) What does the Psalmist mean when he says in 93:2, "Your throne is established from old?"

- 3) Looking at Proverbs 19:21: How is it great news that the purpose of the Lord will stand, even over mine or others' plans?

- 4) How is it great news that the Lord does whatever he pleases (Psalm 135:6)?

Prayer:

- 1) Spend some time praising the glory of our God. Consider using these verses.
- 2) Lift up to the Lord your plans or desires. Submit them to him.

Day 2: God's Plan in Our Salvation

Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Questions:

1) In Ephesians 1, underline all of the actions attributed to God.

a) Who has accomplished your salvation?

b) What could have stopped God from saving you?

2) Why does God accomplish your salvation?

a) What might this change in your life when you come to know that your salvation was accomplished for his glory? (Hint, see verse 12).

Prayer:

1) Spend time praising God using the underlined phrases above.

2) What might you ask of the God who has purposed and accomplished your salvation?

Day 3: All Things For His Glory

Colossians 1:16

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Romans 11:36

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Isaiah 43:25

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Psalms 25:11

For your own name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Isaiah 48:9,10

For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off....For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

Jeremiah 13:11

I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory.

Questions:

- 1) What is the purpose of God's work in the passages above?
- 2) How will God be glorified according to the Old Testament passages above?
- 3) In what ways does God glorify himself through you?
- 4) What specific parts of your life are not God-glorifying right now? (Be more specific than sin.)

Prayer:

- 1) Give God glory through praise of his mighty works.
- 2) Ask God for specific ways that he could glorify himself through you.

Day 3: The Whole Bible As God's Word For Us

2 Peter 1:16-21

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

- 1) Why is it important to that our faith is based on "eyewitness testimony" instead of simply a spiritual feeling about what is true? (See verse 16 & 18)

- 2) If the "Prophetic Word" refers to the Old Testament prophets, what is Peter saying has happened in Christ?
 - A. Peter is saying the Old Testament has been confirmed by the new. If all of Scripture goes together, how might this affect what and how you read in the Bible?

- 3) How would it change the way you interact with Scripture if verse 21 is true?

Prayer:

- 1) Try praying Scripture to God. Pick a Psalm, such as 142. Consider these words as breathed out from God himself.

- 2) Pray a truth from Scripture for your life. Pray it with the confidence that it is from God. Examples: Luke 21:17-19, Romans 8:31-39, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Day 3: Something More Than Being Better

Romans 5:6-9

“6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”

Romans 3:21-25

“21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.”

Questions:

- 1) According to Romans 5:6-9, why did Christ die for us?

- 2) Why is it surprising that Christ would die for us?

- 3) What does it mean to be justified?

- 4) What did/does it take for us to be justified?

- 5) What does not justify you?

Prayer:

- 1) Spend some time meditating on the death of the perfect Son of God in your place.
- 2) Spend some time praising God for the blood of Jesus on your behalf.

WEEK FIVE
God is The Reward
Day 1: God is the Good News

Psalm 27:4

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”

Psalm 16:11

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Questions:

- 1) In Psalm 27, what is the Psalmist asking for from the Lord?

- 2) Why does he desire to dwell with the Lord?

- 3) What kind of desire is this? One desire among man? One great desire next to a few? Or, the ultimate desire of his heart?

- 4) According to Psalm 16, what does the presence of the Lord hold for us?

- 5) Sometimes we want “things” and “benefits” from the Lord. But what if the great benefit from God is God? How would that shape your life? How would that shape what your pursuit of happiness or purpose or meaning?

Prayer:

Ask the Lord to reveal the joy and wonder of his presence to you. Wait on him in prayer to give it. If he does not give it there, persist in prayer and waiting until he does give it.

Day 2: Joy as Gift and Command

Habakkuk 3:17-18

“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

John 16:22-23

“22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. 23 In that day you will ask nothing of me.”

Psalm 5:11

“But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.”

Questions:

- 1) What are some of the similarities you see among these verses?

- 2) What is the command for the reader in Psalm 37:4?

- 3) According to John 16 and Habakkuk 3, when ought we to rejoice in the Lord? When we get our way?

- 4) How do you delight yourself in God himself?

Prayer:

Spend some time delighting in the Lord. Consider his ways. Consider where he has been good to you. Bless him and enjoy him.

Day 3: Heaven Is Him

Revelation 19:6-9

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”

Revelation 22:1-5

“1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”

Questions:

1) Revelation 19 is a scene depicting the final victory of Jesus over all things. How does Revelation 19 characterize this moment? Is it a parade? Does everyone get their own planet?

2) Revelation 22 describes heaven coming to earth. How is eternity described here? What is the role of God’s presence? What is said about never-ending days on the beach or mountain hikes or rounds of golf?

3) If the glory of eternity is the presence of God, what does that tell you about his presence?

4) If the point of everything is to give you the greatest gift ever, relationship with God, how does that then shape your pursuit of the good life here on earth?

Prayer:

Spend some time meditating on the heavenly scenes in Revelation 19 & 22. Consider the wonder of God’s presence there. Speak to the Lord now, knowing that you have access to the reward of the Gospel – God himself.

WEEK SIX:
You Can't Do It Alone
Day 1: We, Not Me

2 Peter 2:9-10

“9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

“6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

Questions:

- 1) English makes it difficult to discern if the second person pronoun “You” is plural or singular. Southerners have fixed that problem (but what do we know?). Is the “you” in both of these passage plural or singular?

- 2) What difference does it make that God saved a people for himself and not simply a bunch of individuals?

- 3) What titles has God put on us as a saved people? How might that re-make your idea of what the church is?

- 4) According to Deuteronomy 7, what great qualities did we bring to the table before God saved us?

- 5) Why then did God save us?

Prayer:

Spend some time blessing God that he saved a people few in number. Ask God to help you see his people, the church, for who God has made them to be.

Day 3: We Need You, and You Need Us

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Questions:

- 1) What is Paul trying to communicate to us about community through the analogy of the church as the “body”?

- 2) Can you do it on our your own, according to 1 Corinthians 12?

- 3) Can others do it without you, according to 1 Corinthians 12?

- 4) Why do we need each other, according to 1 Corinthians 12?

- 5) What holds you back from pursuing your faith in community?

Prayer:

Ask God to show you whether you are a hand or a foot. Ask him to show you how to live in community, serving, encouraging, and being in relationship with the redeemed of the Lord. Spend some time praying for your church.

WEEK SEVEN
The Gospel Affects Everything
Day 1: It Infects before it Affects

Matthew 27:45-51

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Questions:

1) In Exodus 26:7-10, God commands the people to make a curtain for the tent of meeting. This curtain will serve as a barrier between the people and the Holy of Holies (where God dwells). In Matthew 27, it is noted that this curtain was torn in two at the death of Christ. Why? (See Hebrews 9 for further reading on this matter)

2) If God only dwelled and communed with his people in the Holy of Holies, what has happened now that this barrier wall has been torn down?

3) If the divide between the sacred and secular has been torn in two, what effect does that have on your life?

4) What areas of your life might you have put a curtain up and kept God out of?

Prayer:

Spend time praising God for his curtain-tearing act in Jesus Christ. Ask God to help you remove barriers to him in your life.

Day 2: Working It Through

Acts 10:9-16

“9 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. 10 And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance 11 and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” 14 But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” 16 This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Galatians 2:16

“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”

Questions:

1) In Galatians 2:16, Paul refers to “works of the law.” “Works of the law” has to do with anything that you do to try to make yourself right before God. What has replaced works of the law with the coming of Christ?

2) If acting religious no longer makes you right with God, what happens to all of the religious acts that you previously did?

3) How does Acts 10 reflect Galatians 2:16?

4) In light of Acts 10 and Galatians 2:16, how should we think about all of the regular, non-religious aspects of our life now?

Prayer:

Ask God to reveal to you his glory and his purpose in specific and particular “regular” things in your life. For example, ask God to show you his purposes and goodness in the dinner dishes or the hours at work.

Day 3: In Everything

1 Corinthians 10:31

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Colossians 3:18-24

“18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Questions:

- 1) Paul names multiple, everyday roles of regular people. Why?

- 2) What does it mean to “do everything to the glory of God?”

- 3) Describe how an area of your life might change if you knew you were doing it for the Lord and for his glory?

- 4) What would you like the Lord to leave alone, not mess around with, in your life?

Prayer:

The big idea this week is that the Gospel effects every part of your life. Pray and ask God to infect the whole of your life with his good news. Pray about the specific areas you thought about above where God might need to make some changes in you so that you might live for his glory.

WEEK EIGHT
Obedience: The “Why” is as Important as the “What”
Day 1: Obedience as a Function of Identity

Galatians 2:17-21

“17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

Romans 6:12-14

“12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

Questions:

- 1) In the verses above, why does Paul think we should no longer sin?

- 2) What do you think the average person believes is the reason to obey God and not sin? How does that correlate or not correlate to what Paul is saying here?

- 3) How does your identity as one who is dead to the law affect your desire to live for obedience to Christ?

- 4) If I am consistently and willfully disobedient, what might that say about my identity?

Prayer:

Meditate in the Spirit on the truth that you are dead to the law, no longer an instrument of unrighteousness but righteousness because of Christ Jesus. Ask God for specific areas where he might create in you a desire for obedience.

Day 2: What is Obedience?

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

“11 For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”

Colossians 1:10

“...so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

Ephesians 4:1

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

Philippians 1:27

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

Questions:

- 1) What is the pattern of speech Paul is repeating here?

- 2) In using this phrase, “walk in a manner worthy of the gospel,” Paul is giving us both the “what” and the “why” of obedience. Why be obedient? What is obedience?

- 3) What changes when obedience flows from grace and not grace from obedience?

- 4) Be specific about an area of your life today where you need to walk in light of the obedience of Christ.

Prayer:

Ask God to show you where he might need to change both your motivation and your actions for obedience. Spend some time dwelling on the goodness of God saving you. Then apply it toward a specific area of disobedience to him in your life.

Day 3: Obedience For a Reason

Matthew 28:19-20

“19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Questions:

- 1) What title is God giving to us in Acts 1?

- 2) What does a witness do in a courtroom?

- 3) How might that correlate to being a witness for Christ?

- 4) What does it look like for you to be obedient to Matthew 28:19-20? Be specific.

Prayer:

Pray for someone you love to come to know Jesus if they do not. Ask God how you might be a witness in their life. Ask God to help you see where you might be a witness in other areas and ways.

WEEK NINE
How It Ends Matters
Day 1: What Will Be

Revelation 20:7-10

“7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Revelation 21:1-7

“1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

Questions:

- 1) In step-by-step fashion, describe what happens at the end of days according to these two passages above.
- 2) What will it be like to live in a place where evil no longer exists?
- 3) What does it mean when the one seated on the throne says in Rev. 21:5, “Behold I am making all things new.” What will be new? What will it look like for everything to be renewed?
- 4) Explain why these passages are really good news for you today.

Prayer:

Spend time praising the Alpha and the Omega for how he will consummate all things for his glory one day. Ask God to show you where you might hope and long more for the end of days.

Day 2: When Will The Kingdom Come?

Matthew 25:1-13

“1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

“1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Questions:

- 1) Will we know when the end is coming? Why or why not?
- 2) What should we **not** spend our time doing in regards to the timing of the kingdom?
- 3) If the end comes like a thief in the night, what are we then to do?
- 4) What does it mean to be prepared for the end?

Prayer: Ask God to show you where you might need to prepare yourself for his return. Ask him to come soon!

Day 3: Why the End Matters

Matthew 25:14-30

“14 For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ 23 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ 26 But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Questions:

- 1) What is the “it” that Jesus is referring to in verse 14?

- 2) If Jesus is talking about his return, how should that return impact today?

- 3) What are you called to do to further his kingdom before his return?

- 4) What might you be called **not** to do?

Prayer:

Pray that your kingdom calling would be effective. If you do not have a kingdom calling, ask God to reveal such a thing to you. Ask him to remove trivial things from your life.