

**Seven Words to Life**  
 Redemption  
*Selected Texts*

This series is intended to help us create a Christian worldview; a way of explaining what and why everything is, including our own lives. We want to see the world and all that happens, us and all that happens in our lives, from God's perspective.

In the process, we are gaining an overview of the Bible as God's story and our story. This is what has happened so far -

### **First Word - Creation**

- A good and great God created everything
- He created us to image/represent him on the earth
- He is moving every created thing toward Shalom (as demonstrated in his rest on the final day of the first week)

Shalom = peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, tranquility, integrity, prosperity

We are God image-bearers who work with God in creating Shalom throughout the world

The first, primary and fundamental way in which God's grace/love/mercy/Shalom is demonstrated is in relationships. When we fail to image God in the creation of Shalom, our relationships fail and much else of life falls into disarray.

**APP:** Do we daily image God's shalom in all our relationships or do we represent anti-Shalom?

### **Second Word - Fall**

- Through willful decisions contrary to God's character and will, Adam and Eve thrust all creation into derision and sorrow
- It is our nature to also disobey God and cause harm to ourselves and others
- The first, primary and fundamental way in which God's grace/love/mercy/Shalom is demonstrated is in relationships. When we fail to image God in the creation of Shalom, our relationships fail and much else of life falls into disarray.

**APP:** What is your intentional plan to overcome the Fall and work with God in creating Shalom?

(This year mine has been to daily:

- a) Do something 'good' for someone else
- b) Do something 'good' for myself

How do I define good? Moving myself and others in the direction of Shalom; all-inclusive reconciliation.

At the end of the day I ask myself, "*How did I move me and someone else toward Shalom?*")

### Third Word - Israel

- In great grace, God continues to work toward Shalom by creating a people for himself with whom he can dwell
- Like Adam and Eve, Israel continually rebelled against God, failed to experience Shalom and suffered the consequence yet,
- God remains faithful to his people and his redemptive agenda to reconcile all things to himself

After A&E's failure, God intended for Israel to demonstrate what it means to live in God's kingdom, to walk with God, to know his Shalom. Israel tragically failed.

**APP:** Am I obeying God's commands, which, in effect, move my world toward God's great goal of Shalom?

### Fourth Word - Incarnation

- Ultimately, God himself came to earth to demonstrate Shalom and encourage us to walk with him. Everyone who walked with Jesus experienced that Shalom as Jesus reviewed Eden and previewed the New Jerusalem.
- People so despised Jesus that they killed him. We are naturally self-destructors.
- In God's eternal providence, Christ was raised from the dead and promises ultimate, eternal Shalom to all those who repent and believe
- Because we are *in* Christ, the paradigm, plan and potential for our lives is Christ.

**APP:** Am I walking with Christ, creating that 'biosphere' of Shalom?

### Fifth Word – Redemption

We now live in an era when the church – comprised of Jews and Gentiles - has been called image God in Shalom. This is what it means to be redeemed.

It means to mirror Eden and reflect the New Jerusalem. What does that look like?

I want to suggest that we apply three Scriptures to fulfil the role as image bearers:

#### **First: Love is the Sum and the End of it All**

**Matthew 22:34-40** - *But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

- a) God lives in eternal community

- b) God is the only properly functioning community in existence
- c) Community is derived from God's existence
- d) Refusing community is denying your humanity
- e) The Trinity is our model for relationships
- f) Those relationships are a witness about God and his redemptive goal
- g) Self-centeredness harms our relationship with God and others

### **Second: This is what it means to love God**

**John 14:15 - If you love me, you will keep my commandments**

Do you love yourself? Really love yourself? Loving God is simultaneously and equally the most selfless and selfish thing you can do.

As the Creator, God knows how life works best. Obeying him gains you that best life.

**Communion with God means  
communion with God's friends**

**Only when we love God most  
can we love other best**

### **Third: This is what it means to love other people**

- **We were made for relationships** – it is not good for us to be alone  
*Hermits are not holy*
- **All relationships possess inherent challenges**  
*Health is not measured by a lack of problems but how we handle relational disappointment*
- **We are all struggling with sin which multiplies the potential for difficulty**  
*Wise relationships are aware of the deeper, spiritual struggle*
- **Each of us is tempted to make relationships the end and not the means**  
*“What can I get out of this” rather than “how does this make me like Jesus?”*
- **No strategy can create problem-free relationships**  
*Exhibiting a 1 Cor13, Gal 5, cross mentality is not a plan but lifestyle*
- **God uses relationships to form Christ in us**  
*Why bother with relationships if there is so much pain in them? Because Christ did.*

We all have relationships that are unhealthy for us and others. I'm not speaking about relationships in which repetitive or particular behaviors have proven that hedges/boundaries should be established by the non-needy person.

No relationship ever delivers our dream because we are fallen people living in a fallen world. The greatest danger to any relationship, especially in marriage or parenting, can be our expectations. But God has created us to live in the harmony he enjoys in eternal Trinity.

**1 Corinthians 13:1-4 & 13** - *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things <sup>8</sup> Love never ends..... <sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

Love is:

- Patient – With whom/how you been impatient?
- Kind – With whom/how have you been unkind?
- Does not envy – Whom do you envy and how is it represented?
- Does not boast – With whom, how have you not remained silent?
- Is not arrogant – What person/issue causes you to ‘blow up’ in pride?
- Is not rude – What person/issue causes you to act contrary to Christ’s character?
- Does not insist on its own way – To whom, when did you last surrender your way?
- Is not irritable – What/who is your ‘nails on the blackboard’ person?
- Is not resentful – Whom do you resent and how does is it displayed?
- Does not rejoice in wrongdoing – Are you a ‘keeping score’ person? With whom?
- Rejoices with the truth – How do you celebrate the success of others?
- Bears all things – Whose sins / what sins are you happy to reveal?
- Believes all things – Whom do you naturally disbelieve?
- Hopes all things – What person have you given up on?
- Endures all things – With whom have you stopped enduring?

How in the world can I do that? By the power of the Holy Spirit!

**Fourth: This is what it means to live in Shalom community**

**Galatians 5:16-24** - *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

None of the fruit of the Spirit can be evidenced or exercised outside of community. These fruits are granted to enable us to live in community. They are also required to maintain community.

- a) Love - Would others identify you as a lover or fighter?
- b) Joy - Are you a joy-bringer?
- c) Peace - Are your relationships characterized by peace?
- d) Patience - Do you judge before hearing all sides?
- e) Kindness – Is your goal in relationships to show kindness?

- f) Goodness – How are you good to others?
- g) Faithful – Do you seek out the best for those you love, befriend?
- h) Gentleness – What is your first reaction to relational strife?
- i) Self-control – Is it you, or circumstances, that dictates your responses?

Have you ‘crucified’ the old man (vs 19-21) and is Christ living in you?

Paul repeatedly states that we are ‘one’ in Christ. Unity as a biblical concept does not mean uniformity. Christian unity assumes diversity since the church is comprised of Jews and Gentiles.

- We were one in Adam (We have a unified anthropology – Gen 10 emphasizes this)

IMP: (Read Mark 10:1-9)

- a) Adam was one.
- b) In the making of Eve, Adam became two. v 6
- c) Marriage unites the two back into one / makes Adam whole (*leave...hold fast...one flesh*).
- d) Disunity reflects an undoing (*no longer two but one flesh*) of what God has done (*let not man separate*)
- We are one in Christ (We have a unified soteriology, reflecting that salvation or the new birth, is greater than our anthropology or first birth)

Unity is a sense of oneness that surpasses what separates us. We do not all share the same birth, background, education, influences, passions, etc., but we do all share the same Lord and when we confess that “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3), we acknowledge that Christ is greater than our differences. Living out that confession is what it means to live in community.

### **Fifth: The Church as a Reflection of the Trinity**

- a) God created the church to be a witness to himself; his character and will.
- b) The Trinity exists in perfect community.
- c) God lives in perfect Shalom.
- d) There is never any disunity within the Trinity.
- e) The church is supposed to reflect that harmony
- f) Disunity is a false witness to
  - God’s nature and
  - will for all things (i.e., he is reconciling all things to himself and disunity moves things away from the Center who is Christ)

The witness and ministry – the witnessing ministry of the Trinity is seen at

- a) Christ’s baptism (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23)
- b) Christ’s teaching on the Holy Spirit (John 16:4a-15)

This means that when Jesus said, “*As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you*” (John 20:21), it implies more than just being on mission but that mission appropriately representing the Trinity. We are on mission as we represent the Trinity and when we don’t, we are not on mission with God. This has serious implications for how we live in community with one another. Does our body life reflect the unity/joy, etc. of the Trinity?

### **Band Returns**

**Conclusion:** What does it mean to be redeemed?

It means God created the church as a community of people who dwell with him, to reflect his character and will in the world that he is redeeming. Doing so *is* our mission.

Living with other Christians in such a way as to rightly reflect Jesus is your purpose for existence in this world.

- Only as we live in community can we reflect the Shalom God intends to represent his reconciling work in the world
- Only as we live in community can we become the humans God intends us to be.
- If we can't live with Christians, we can't live rightly with/around unbelievers.

It is imperative that we recognize our sinfulness and rely on the Holy Spirit's power/grace to live in a Christian community that makes unbelievers jealous for healthy relationships.

Creation  
Fall  
Israel  
Incarnation  
Redemption

I trust the Holy Spirit has created a hunger in you for a life that reflects Trinitarian community and a passion to strive for it, even as fallen people living in a fallen world with fallen people.

**Community Groups:**

- 1 – What are the five words we have already learned to tell the Bible story and ours?
- 2 – Take a moment to define each of those five steps in God's redemptive drama.
- 3 – Describe how the Trinity lives in perfect other-centeredness community
  - \*The Father was willing to send the Son. Think about what it cost the Father.
  - \*The Son was willing to obey the Father. Think about what it cost the Son.
  - \*The Holy Spirit is submitting to the Son. Think about what it costs the Holy Spirit.
- 4 – How does self-centeredness not reflect the Trinity?
- 5 – How does self-centeredness harm our relationships?
- 6 – Why is it important to love God first and more than people we love?
- 7 – Work through the questions concerning 1 Cor 13:1-4 & 13 and discuss how we can love others and what it looks like to not love others. Discuss specific examples and relationships.
- 8 – Work through the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:16-24. Talk about what it looks like to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in relationships and what it looks like when we don't. Discuss specific examples and relationships.
- 9 – What does it mean that the church's mission is to reflect Trinitarian community? How can we succeed at other things and yet fail at this core reason for our existence? What does it say

about us as Christians and churches that we fail to live in harmony with one another and yet claim to be 'on mission' with God? Are we then, simply playing church?

10 - How does each member of the Trinity's love for the other, free each person in the Trinity from self-love, self-focus and self-service? How does knowing about and experiencing God's love free us from self-love, self-focus and self-service?