

Deal Pentecostal Church Sermon Outlines 2021

Daily Prayer for 2021

My Father, I could never have sought my happiness in Your love, unless You had first loved me. Your Spirit has encouraged me by grace to seek You; Your Spirit has made known to me Your reconciliation in Jesus; Your Spirit has taught me to believe it; has helped me to take You for my God and portion. Grant me to grow in the knowledge and experience of Your love and walk in it all the way to glory. Blessed for ever be Your fatherly affection, which chose me to be one of Your children by faith in Jesus. I thank You for giving me the desire to live as such.

It is in Jesus, my Elder Brother, that I have my new birth, restraining power and renewing grace. It is by Your Spirit that I call You my Father, that I believe in You and that I love You. Strengthen me inwardly for every purpose of my Christian life. Let Your Spirit continually reveal to me my interest in Christ and open to me the riches of Your love in Him. May He abide in me that I may know my union with Jesus and enter into constant fellowship with Him. By Your Spirit may I daily live to You, rejoice in Your love and find it the same to me as to Your Son. By Your Spirit may I become rooted and grounded in You as a house on rock. I know but little—increase my knowledge of Your love in Jesus. Keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of Your love, so that I may find its eternal fullness. Magnify Your love to me according to Your greatness and not according to my deserts or prayers—and whatever increase Your give, let it draw out greater love to You.

January

Thought for the Month:

You can't forgive by will alone, but you can hold the whole problem up to God and ask Him to give you the gift of a forgiving heart. You will receive it and when you have received it then use it to forgive others. You will find that passing on God's gift (of forgiveness) will come quite naturally and easily to you. I ceased the attempt to forgive specific individuals and instead prayed for the more general gift of a forgiving heart. It was not granted the next day or for several days, but gradually it came. After that, a great burden rolled away, my heart softened, I was willing to forgive any real or imagined adversary. From that time on I became free of bitterness, I have stayed that way ever since, with far greater inner peace. *Jonathan Aitkin*

Write a verse week—Joy: a feeling of great pleasure and happiness

Sunday 3rd January. Ps.106:1-5. 2Pet.1:3-11 (ON ZOOM)

03/01/2021 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Make every effort to add to your faith... 2Pet.1:5

As Jesus died, His final words were: *It is finished!*^{Jn.19:30} When Jesus said that, He was declaring that His Mission was completed—the price had been paid in full and mankind had been emancipated from sin by God's Son who had become the Saviour of the world: *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*^{1s.53:5} Jesus came to save us: *Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*^{Lk.2:11} *But now Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*^{Heb.9:26} And what Jesus did, we no longer have to try to do—not that we could have done it anyway! Jesus has taken our toil and weariness and given us life^{Jn.3:16} because He is the life: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*^{Jn.14:6} Spiritual rest (called “Sabbath”) is a gift from God: *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.*^{Heb.4:9-11} This rest does not come from doing nothing but from doing God's will: *But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”*^{Jn.4:32-34} So if we are to stay refreshed and not get tired, we must do God's work—and God's work is to believe (trust) Jesus: *“What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*^{Jn.6:28-29} Believing God and His Son is eternal life: *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*^{Jn.17:3} By trusting Jesus we have (spiritual) rest: *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*^{Matt.11:28-30} Jesus has made Christianity easy for us—even prayer is a joy. Jesus agonised in intercession for us: *And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*^{Lk.22:44} But because of Jesus' anguished intercession, our prayer should be sweet and beautiful communion: *For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour.*^{Is.53:12-54:1} As Martin Luther said: *Remorse before Calvary is of God; remorse after you have been to Calvary is of the devil. Repent of your sin, yes; but do not make your sin a subject for long and melancholy meditation. Why should I cheat God by spending my time and energy on remorse? I am greater than my sins.* God wants us to enjoy our life with Him: *Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all*

the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labour under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.^{Ecc.9:7-10} However, if we ignore God, we will get spiritually tired: *A fool's work wearies him,*^{Ecc.10:15} Jesus exchanged many things for us—a spiritual “new for old” policy!

Jesus exchanged our Punishment: *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*^{Is.53:5} **with His Forgiveness:** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*^{Eph.1:7}

Jesus exchanged our Sickness: *He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.*^{Matt.8:17} **with His Health:** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*^{1Pet.2:24}

Jesus exchanged our Sin: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us.*^{2Cor.5:21} **with His Righteousness:** *so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*^{2Cor.5:21}

Jesus exchanged our Death: *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*^{Rom.5:8} **with His Life:** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*^{Rom.6:23}

Jesus exchanged our Spiritual Poverty: *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.*^{2Cor.8:9} **with His Spiritual Riches:** *so that you through his poverty might become rich.*^{2Cor.8:9}

Jesus exchanged our Shame: *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*^{Heb.12:2} **with His Glory:** *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*^{Heb.2:10}

Jesus exchanged our Rejection: *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*^{Matt.27:46} **with His Acceptance:** *to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us [made us accepted] in the One he loves.*^{Eph.1:6}

Jesus exchanged our Curse: *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*^{Gal.3:13} **with His Blessing:** *He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*^{Gal.3:14}

Because of Calvary and the New Covenant, Believers are complete in Jesus: *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*^{Col.2:9-10} And we have everything we need for (spiritual) life and godliness: *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*^{2Pet.1:2-4}

So why must we add to our faith? *Make every effort to add to your faith*^{2Pet.1:5}

Faith is a living thing: *The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed...”*^{Lk.17:5-6} If we don't stand firm in our faith, we won't stand at all^{Is.7:9} which is why we must build ourselves up in our faith. *But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*^{Jude17-21} Our own natural instincts can appear similar to the Holy Spirit's prompting—but the result is quite different. However, the Word of God can divide between our soul and our spirit (our natural instincts and our spiritual instincts that are inspired by the Holy Spirit)—which is why we need

to be Bible literate and exercise discernment: *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*^{Heb.4:12}

If we don't build up ourselves in the faith and add to our faith, we are short-sighted and spiritually blind, forgetting that we have been forgiven from our sins: *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is near-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*^{2Pet.1:5-11} Peter writes that we need to add to our faith: *goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.* These qualities are personality traits and are similar to the "fruit of the spirit" (i.e., the personality of the Holy Spirit): *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*^{Gal.5:22-23} And they are developed by trouble! *My fellow believers, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience, perseverance and endurance. And let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do and finish its work. Then you will be completely mature and will have everything you need.*^{Jas.1:2-4} We tend to rely on the Holy Spirit more through difficulties. When the Holy Spirit becomes embedded with our spirit, His personality becomes our personality and maturity is relying on the Holy Spirit in the good times as well as in the tough times! Spiritual fellowship is reliance on the Holy Spirit and will only fully develop as we fellowship with other people who have the Holy Spirit—New Covenant Believers. Then we will have the same joy that Mary and Elizabeth had when the Holy Spirit within their babies caused them to leap for joy. We could paraphrase that encounter like this: *As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the Holy Spirit within me leaped for joy. Blessed is the one who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to them!* So let's keep on adding to our faith all the personality characteristics of the Holy Spirit so that we *make our calling and election sure, then we will never fall, and will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Faith

My God, I bless You that You have given me the eye of faith, to see You as Father, to know You as a Covenant God and to experience Your love planted in me. For faith is the grace of union by which I spell out my entitlement to You. Faith casts my anchor upwards where I trust in You and engage You to be my Lord. Be pleased to live and move within me, breathing in my prayers, inhabiting my praises, speaking in my words, moving in my actions, living in my life, causing me to grow in grace. Your bounteous goodness has helped me believe, Lord, fan this divine spark into glowing flame. Lord, awake faith to put forth its strength until all heaven fills my soul and all impurity is cast out. (*Puritan Prayers*)

Questions

1. If God wants us to enjoy life, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of people in general?
2. If God wants us to enjoy life, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of Christians?
3. How do we make Christianity work for us?
4. How can we add to our faith?

5. In what way does trouble help develop our faith?
6. How can we rely on the Holy Spirit more?

Sunday 10th January Ps.107:1-9. 2Pet.1:12-15 (ON ZOOM)

10/01/2021 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

So I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. I think it is right for me to remind you. 2Pet.1:12-13

How much of God do you need to know in order to live a successful Christian life?

Actually, we need very little knowledge of God in order to live a successful Christian life because Christianity is a heart-religion, where God writes His laws on our heart and gives us the desire to obey Him. The absolute basics of faith are: we must receive Jesus as Lord and acknowledge that He is God's Son, who was born of Mary and that He died and rose again for our sins: *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.* 2Tim.2:8 *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.* Jn.1:12-13 *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.* Rom.10:9-10 *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.* 1Cor.15:17 *No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.* 1Jn.2:23 However, if we are not to be blown off course through deception and false teaching we need to mature. This means being strong in our faith by growing in our faith—but there are no short-cuts to maturity. In our natural life, it takes time to grow from a baby to an adult—learning is a life-long experience and we need to regularly eat, exercise, study and rest if we are to develop into full maturity. And once we have learnt the basics of life, we can use those skills easily and our work becomes enjoyable. So it is in our spiritual life—once we have learnt the basics of the Christian faith (the 3 “**Rs**”—**Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness**) we can use those skills easily and our work becomes enjoyable. Nearing the end of his life William Booth was asked *'What are the things which threaten Christianity in the coming years?'* He replied, *'I consider the chief danger to Christianity to be: Religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, Forgiveness without Repentance, Salvation without regeneration, Politics without God, Happiness without holiness and heaven without Hell.'* We are spirit, soul and body and if we are to maintain our maturity we must eat, exercise, study and rest both physically and spiritually. **We eat the Bread of Life:** *Jesus answered, It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'* 1Matt.4:4 **We exercise by prayer and putting God's Word into practice:** *But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.* Jude.20-21 *Jesus answered: 'My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.'* 1Lk.8:21 He replied, *"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."* 1Lk.11:28 **We study the Word of God:** *Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.* 2Tim.2:15 *Besides being wise, the spokesman also taught the people what he knew. He very carefully thought about it, studied it, and arranged it in many proverbs. The spokesman tried to find just the right words. He wrote the words of truth very carefully. Words from wise people are like spurs. Their collected sayings are like nails that have been driven in firmly. They come from one shepherd. Be warned, my children, against anything more than these. People never stop writing books. Too much studying will wear out your body. After having heard it all, this is the conclusion: Fear God, and keep his commands, because this applies to everyone. God will certainly judge everything that is done. This includes every secret thing, whether it is good or bad.* 1Ecd.12:9-14 **We rest from our own effort of trying to please God by doing (instead of being):** *God's promise that we may enter his place of rest still stands. We are afraid that some of you think you won't enter his place of rest. We have heard the same*

Good News that your ancestors heard. But the message didn't help those who heard it in the past because they didn't believe. We who believe are entering that place of rest... Therefore, a time of rest and worship exists for God's people. Those who entered his place of rest also rested from their work as God did from his. So we must make every effort to enter that place of rest. Then no one will be lost by following the example of those who refused to obey. ^{Heb.4:1-11} Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. ^{Matt.11:28-30}

However, we must keep to the routine if we are going to stay the course! So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ^{Col.2:6-7} **And that is where Church is really important.** Although we **can** spiritually eat, exercise, study and rest at home by ourself (just as we can physically eat, exercise, study and rest at home by ourself) it is hard to stay sane and sweet without the company of people we love. Isolation is bad for us—and actually, we were never meant to be by ourself. The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ^{Gen.2:18} God has always intended to use the gathered Believers (the Church) to show the world His plan of salvation—people in fellowship with Christ’s Body not those in isolation: My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through Christians like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels. ^{Eph.3:9-10} On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ^{1Thess.2:4-8} When we meet together in the Name of Jesus we are Church—and we can edify, exhort and encourage one another (which what prophecy is!): But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. ^{1Cor.14:3} And although this is usually when we come together physically, we are Church however we meet (even meeting on Zoom as we are today). So let’s continue to remind each other of the old fashioned Gospel that is simple, settled and spiritual. How many times have you heard Christians say “God is doing a new thing”: Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. ^{Is.43:18-19} But God is not doing a new thing anymore—the “new thing” that God promised through Isaiah was the New Covenant that Jesus introduced 2000 years ago. And yet God is doing a new thing because His mercies are new every morning and though His love is old fashioned, it is always fresh. Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ^{Lam.3:22-23} God’s command to love is the same old command but now it has the new dimension of Jesus: Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. ^{1Jn.2:7-8} And so our greatest priority is to remind ourselves (and one another) of the old, old story of Jesus and His love. Peter wrote: I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. ^{2Pet.1:12-15} Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the

words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.^{2Pet.3:1-2}

Even though some have wandered from the faith, we can be sure of standing firm by remembering the old-fashioned Gospel. *Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*^{1Tim.6:10-12} The Gospel message has not changed—and never will because it is unchangeable: *Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.*^{Jude.3} Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. *Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*^{1Tim.1:18-19} Deception works because people believe the lie to be true—so how can we be sure that we are not deceived? *Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool.*^{2Cor.11:14-16} **Here are some simple yet salient safeguards that will stop us being deceived:**

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people. We are likely to be deceived and go astray if we isolate ourselves from people who are credible and trustworthy: *A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart. When the wicked comes, contempt comes also; And with dishonour comes reproach. [A person who isn't friendly looks out only for himself. He opposes all good sense. A foolish person doesn't want to understand. He takes delight in saying only what he thinks.]*^{Prov.18:1-3}

Test what people say and do against the tried and tested teaching of Scripture as taught by the Believers over generations—a new revelation is likely to be a fake revelation! *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*^{1Jn.4:1}

Look at the person's character—do they have the personality of the Holy Spirit and are they settled in their faith? *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control? But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*^{1Tim.6:11-12} **Do they have the peace of Christ AND the Word of God dwelling them?** *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*^{Col.3:15-17}

So, how much of God do you need to know in order to live a successful Christian life? Not much BUT we need to be regularly reminded of the basics—of the 3 Rs of **Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness.** *So I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. I think it is right for me to remind you.*^{2Pet.1:12-13} Then we won't fall from our safe position but grow in the Grace of God: *Dear friends, you already know that. So be on your guard. Then you won't be led down the wrong path by the mistakes of people who don't obey the law. You won't fall from your safe position. Grow in the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Get to know him better. Give him glory both now and forever. Amen.*^{2Pet.3:17-18}

O Lord, help me not to expect happiness from the world, but only in You. Let me not think that I shall be more happy by living to myself, for I can only be truly happy if employed for

You and if I desire to live in this world only to do and suffer what You allot me. Teach me that if I do not live a life that satisfies You, I shall not live a life that will satisfy myself. Help me to desire the spirit and temper of angels who willingly come down to this lower world to perform Your will, though their desires are heavenly and not set in the least upon earthly things—then I shall be of that temper I ought to have. Help me not to think of living to You in my own strength, but always to look to You and rely on You for assistance. Teach me that there is no greater truth than this: that I can do nothing of myself. Lord, this is the life that no unconverted person can live—yet it is an end that every godly soul presses after. Let it be my concern to devote myself and my all to You. Make me more fruitful and more spiritual. How precious is time, and how painful to see it fly with little done to good purpose—I need Your help! O may my soul sensibly depend upon You for all sanctification and every accomplishment of Your purposes for me, for the world, and for Your kingdom. (*Puritan Prayers*)

Questions

Explain simply the 3 Rs of Christianity: Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness

Why is isolation so damaging (both mentally and spiritually)?

How can we be sure that we are not deceived?

How can we best remind one another to add to our faith and that we have been forgiven our past sins: *I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. I think it is right for me to remind you.*^{2Pet.1:12-13}

Sunday 17th January Ps.108:1-6;12-13. 2Pet.1:16-21 (ON ZOOM)

17/01/2021 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*^{Galatians 5:22}

How good is your eyesight? *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.*^{Is.9:1-2}

The chorus of the Quartermaster's Song that the Scouts sing is: "My eyes are dim I cannot see. I have not got my specs with me." We need to wear our spiritual "specs" so that we can see where we are going and not get lost in the morose of this terrible pandemic. Covid-19 virus has affected the whole world and yet there are still people who not only deny its existence but also putting others at risk by not taking the simple precautions of the "hands, face, space" slogan! Prof. Hugh Montgomery, an intensive care doctor, recently warned that hospitals were facing a "tsunami" of Covid cases and he feared it would get worse (after New Year's Eve). He said: "People who do not follow social distancing rules or wear masks have blood on their hands."^{BBC} **Yes this is a dark hour for us all**—especially for those who have lost loved ones—and yet it is not the darkest hour this world has known! How about the Spanish Flu at the end of WW1, when up to 100 million people died across the world? Or the Great Plague of London from 1665 to 1666, when 100,000 people—almost a quarter of the City's population—died? Or the Black Death from 1340-1350, when up to 75–200 million died in Eurasia and North Africa? Other great disasters have come—and gone, such as the tyrannical mass genocide of the last century in Russia (40 million); in China (60 million); in Germany (6 million); in Armenia (5 million); in Cambodia (1 million); in Rwanda (1 million); ...the list goes on and on. **But without doubt the darkest hour this world has ever known was Jesus' Crucifixion when God the Father was separated from God the Son:** *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*^{Matt.15:33-34} Jesus Christ exactly reflects God—because He is the Word who was *with God and is God!*^{Jn.1:1} He [*Jesus Christ*]

is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.^{Col.1:15-20} But when Jesus came to His own people, they rejected Him (especially the religious leaders): *The real light, which shines on everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through him. Yet, the world didn't recognize him. He went to his own people, and his own people didn't accept him. However, he gave the right to become God's children to everyone who believed in him.*^{Jn.1:9-12} Although there is no greater crime against God than to reject His Son—but the most heinous of all crimes was to actually kill Jesus, especially when they knew that He was the Christ: *“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.*^{Jn.19:15-16} *But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,’ they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”*^{Matt.21:38-41} No wonder God's wrath was poured out on Jerusalem for her hypocritical and anti-Christ religion: *A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.*^{Rev.14:8-10}

But God has a way of turning bad into good: *You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives.*^{Gen.50:20} *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose. God planned that those he had chosen would become like his Son. In that way, Christ will be the first and most honored among many brothers.*^{Rom8:28-29} Isaiah prophesied that there was coming a time when a great light would come—and so we would no longer be in gloom (or be gloomy!) however dark our situation was. This great light is Jesus who walked along the shores of Galilee: *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*^{Is.9:1-2}

So, when darkness comes (either emotional, mental or spiritual darkness) we need pay attention to the Word of God because it will dispel that darkness by shining in our hearts: *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*^{1Pet.1:19} Our heart is the organ that pumps blood around our body—and if it stops, we are dead! But “heart” is also used to describe the seat of our emotions—“a good heart”, or “a cold heart” (our soul) and also to describe the God-conscious part of us (our spirit). In the Psalms (which is really a hymn book or book of praise) the word “heart” is used 128 times, either as soul or spirit—which shows the importance of our soul and spirit being in unison when we praise God. We need and holy and happy disposition when we praise God! *I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*^{Ps.9:1-2} *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*^{Ps.51:10;17} *I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused*

and my spirit inquired.^{Ps.77:6} God's Word is a lamp that will show us God's way: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*^{Ps.119:105} *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*^{Ps.119:9-11}

God will restore us to full life if our hearts are repentant and humble: *The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: "I live in the high and holy places with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts."*^{Is.57:15}

But we need to persevere by keeping the prophetic Word shining into our hearts. *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."* Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.^{Eph.5:13-16}

God's Name and His Word are equally important: *I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.*^{Ps.138:2} When we revere, reverence and respect God's Name and His Word, God will shine His light into our hearts which will bring healing and life! *But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,"* says the LORD Almighty.^{Mal.4:2-3}

But these promises are for those who persevere—for those who prevail and overcome: *To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—"He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery"—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*^{Rev.2:26-29}

And the Morning Star is Jesus: *I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.*^{Rev.22:16} As we have been regularly reminding one another, we must stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people if we are going to finish our life in victory as overcomers. There is no short-cut and no other way—we have to keep on doing the same routine things such as praise, prayer and partnering, both publicly as a congregation and also privately as Christians. And because Jesus is our Pioneer—the trail-blazer, the One who has gone ahead and marked the way for us, our routine of praise, prayer and partnering is not tiresome or wearisome but a joy. *And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honour beside God's throne.*^{Heb.12:1-2}

So let's ensure we see life through our spiritual "specs" and respect the prophecies in Scripture (as well as the Spirit who inspired them!): *No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. No prophecy ever originated from humans. Instead, it was given by the Holy Spirit as humans spoke under God's direction.*^{2Pet.1:20-21} Because, for us, there is no more gloom now we have seen Jesus.

Resting in God

My dear Lord, I depend wholly upon You—wean me from all other dependences. You are my all, You overrule all and delight in me. You are the foundation of goodness; how can I distrust You? How can I be anxious about what happens to me? In the light of Your preciousness, the world and all its enjoyments are infinitely poor—I value the favour of men no more than pebbles. Amid the blessings I receive from You, may I never lose the thought of a stranger here on earth. May I love You, my Benefactor, in all my benefits, not forgetting that my greatest danger arises from my advantages. Produce in me a self-despair that will make Jesus precious to me, delightful in all His offices, pleasurable in all His ways. And may I love His commands as well as His promises. Help me to discern between true and false love—the one consisting of

supreme love to You, the other not; the former uniting Your glory and man's happiness that they may become one common interest, the latter disjointing and separating them both. Teach me that genuine love is different in kind from that wrought by rational arguments or the motive of self-interest. Grant me grace to distinguish between the genuine and the false and to rest in You who are all love. (*Puritan Prayers*)

Questions

Why do you think that both our soul and our spirit are called the “heart”?

Does God turn every bad thing into a good thing?

What can we do if we feel gloomy or in a dark place?

How can we ensure that the Scriptures *shine in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts?*

Bible Time Chart

Time Chart of OT

1479B.C.	Exodus under Thutmose II (<i>Thutmose II is the only Pharaoh's mummy to display cysts, possible evidence of plagues that spread through the Egyptian and Hittite Empires at that time. [Edersheim, A., Old Testament Bible History]</i>)
1270B.C.	<i>Another possible date for the Exodus (under Ramesses 2 also called Ramesses the Great)</i>
1000B.C.	David
970B.C.	Solomon builds the Temple
722B.C.	Israel's (<i>Northern Kingdom</i>) Exile 2Kings 17:6
597/6B.C.	Judah's (<i>Southern Kingdom</i>) 1 st Exile 2Kings 24:10-17
586B.C.	Judah's (<i>Southern Kingdom</i>) 2 nd Exile 2Kings 25:1-21
537B.C.	Judah's (<i>Southern Kingdom</i>) Return from Exile

Time Chart of NT

20/19B.C.	<i>Herod's Temple began</i>
18/17B.C.	<i>Herod's Temple in use</i>
c8B.C.	Zechariah in the Temple (Lk.1)
5B.C. April 5 th	Birth of Jesus
4B.C.	<i>Death of Herod the Great</i>
<i>A.D.14 -37</i>	<i>Reign of Tiberius Caesar</i>
A.D.29	Baptism of Jesus Lk.3:1 15 th year of Tiberius reign hence A.D. 29 **
A.D.33 April Wed. 1 st	Last Supper (see Colin Humphreys' " <i>The Mystery of the Last Supper</i> ")
A.D.33 April Fri. 3 rd	Crucifixion of Jesus
c A.D.35	Conversion of Paul <i>Acts 9</i>
<A.D.37	<i>Christianity came to Britain. ***</i>
<i>A.D.37-41</i>	<i>Reign of Caligula</i>
<i>A.D.41-54</i>	<i>Reign of Claudius</i>
<i>c A.D.44</i>	<i>Death of Herod Agrippa 1</i>
< A.D.50	Letter of James
A.D.48-49	Paul's 1 st missionary journey
A.D.49/50	Jerusalem Conference <i>Acts.15</i>
A.D.50	Paul's 2 nd missionary journey
A.D.50-52	Paul at Corinth
A.D.51	1 & 2 Thessalonians from Corinth
A.D.52	Galatians from Corinth
A.D.54	Paul's 3 rd missionary journey
<i>A.D.54 -68</i>	<i>Reign of Nero</i>
A.D.54-57	Paul at Ephesus
A.D.57	1Corinthians from Ephesus
A.D.57	2Corinthians from Macedonia
A.D.57/58	Romans from Corinth
A.D.58	Paul's arrest at Jerusalem
A.D.58-60	Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea
A.D.60-61	Paul winters at Malta
A.D.61	Paul arrives at Rome
A.D.61-63	Paul's imprisonment at Rome
A.D.62	Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon from Rome
A.D.63	Philippians from Rome

A.D.63-65	Paul's release & further ministry
A.D.63	1 Timothy & Titus
A.D.63-64	Hebrews (possibly Barnabas)
<i>A.D.64</i>	<i>Herod's Temple finished</i>
<A.D.65	Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts
<A.D.65	Revelation****
A.D.64	1 & 2 Peter from Rome
A.D.65	Peter's death in Rome
A.D.65	Paul's 2 nd imprisonment at Rome
A.D.65	2 Timothy from Rome
A.D.65	Paul's death at Rome
<A.D.65	Gospel John, 1, 2, & 3 John
A.D.65/66	Jude
<i>A.D.68</i>	<i>Death of Nero</i>
<i>A.D.68-69</i>	<i>Reign of Galba</i>
<i>A.D.69</i>	<i>Reign of Otho</i>
<i>A.D.69</i>	<i>Reign of Vitellius</i>
<i>A.D.69-79</i>	<i>Reign of Vespasian</i>
<i>A.D.70</i>	<i>Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus</i>
<i>A.D.79-81</i>	<i>Reign of Titus</i>
A.D.98/100	Death of John
<i>A.D.81-96</i>	<i>Reign of Domitian</i>

****** Besides the dating from Tiberius, Daniel had stated that it would be 69 “*weeks*” before Messiah would appear from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Daniel 9:26). Accepting that a “*week*” represents seven years and the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was given around 455B.C. (during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah), a specific period of 483 years (69 x 7) was to elapse before the Messiah would appear, dating Jesus’ Baptism at A.D.29 (*there is no date of 0B.C. or A.D.0*).

******* Gildas (A.D.516-570) a British Historian, states, *Meanwhile, these islands ... received the beams of light that is, the Holy precepts of Christ, the true Sun at the latter part, as we know, of the reign of Tiberius Caesar* Roman Emperor A.D. 14-37

****** Reasons for early date for Revelation:**

External evidence:

Clement of Alexandria (A.D.150-220) plainly states that it was Nero who banished John to Patmos, not Emperor Domitian: *And to give you confidence, when you have thus truly repented, that there remains for you a trustworthy hope of salvation, hear a story that is no mere story, but a true account of John the apostle that has been handed down and preserved in memory. When after the death of the tyrant (previously identified as Nero) he removed from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, he used to journey by request to the neighbouring districts of the Gentiles, in some places to appoint bishops, in others to regulate whole churches, in others to set among the clergy some one man, it may be, of those indicated by the Spirit.* (“Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?”, Section 42)

Cerinthus was a C1st author who wrote *The Pseudo-Apocalypse*. He died well before John, i.e. well before A.D.95, but his Pseudo-Apocalypse contains many references to John's Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation).

Internal evidence:

42 months = the period between A.D.64 and A.D.66 when Nero embarked on the most violent campaign against Christians martyring multitudes.

666 = six hundred and sixty-six, not six, six, six. It is the numerical value of “*Caesar Nero*”

The “*temple*” in the “*holy city*” is still standing as John writes, though it is being threatened with devastation (Rev.11:1-2). We know as a matter of historical fact that the Jewish temple was destroyed in A.D.70, and has never been rebuilt. (2) The sixth “*king*” is presently ruling from the “*seven mountains*” and will do so until a king comes who will reign a “*short time*” (Rev.17:9-10). The preterist takes this to be a clear enough allusion to Nero Caesar. According to the enumeration found in Josephus' *Antiquities* (18:2:2,6, 10) and Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Nero is Rome's sixth emperor, following Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius. “...the cryptic number 666 (Rev.13:18) designates Nero. The number involves the use of *gemetria* (assigning numerical values to letters of the alphabet and thus determining the numerical value of words). Nero Caesar written in Hebrew letters has the numerical value of 666. That explanation becomes all the more probable when you realize that in Hebrew, *Nero* can also be spelled *Neron*. With the second “*n*” the numerical value is 666. Without it, 616 (a well-attested reading in some New Testament manuscripts).” J. Stewart Russell, *The Parousia*

“It is with great satisfaction that he finds himself in substantial agreement with the distinguished ecclesiastical historian and theologian, Dr. Dollinger, of Munich, in his interpretation of St. Paul's prediction in 2 Thessalonians. (1) Dr. Dollinger distinctly identifies the “*Man of Sin*” with Nero, a conclusion now so generally accepted by the highest authorities, that it may be regarded as a settled point. (2) He clearly distinguishes between the “*Man of Sin*” and “*the Apostasy*,” so frequently confounded by the mass of interpreters. Dollinger shows that the former is a person, the latter a heresy. (3) He recognizes “*the Beast*” of the Apocalypse as the Emperor, and therefore identical with the “*Man of Sin*.” (4) The miracles wrought by the “*Second Beast*” (the Beast from the earth) he regards as a representation derived from our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives.” (*The Parousia, Afterword*.)

The seven seals are shown to have taken place during the reign of the Emperors Augustus to Vespasian. The seven trumpets during the time when Rome placed 4 battalions at the Euphrates River (Rev.9:14). The seven bowls, when Nero was Emperor (Rev.17:10). But Revelation 20 makes the point that there is a long-time gap between Jerusalem being judged and the events described in verse 9 by its use of the term “*thousand years*”. *A. Corbett: Revelation*.

Rome launched its persecution against Christians in A.D.64 under the direction of Caesar Nero. This ended with his death in A.D.68. It had lasted around 1240 days (3½ years). Rome launched its attack against Jerusalem in A.D.66 and this ended when Jerusalem fell under the leadership of Caesar Vespasian in A.D.70. This was a period of 1260 days (3½ years).

Write a Memory Verse 2021

January — Joy: *a feeling of great pleasure and happiness*

03/01/2021 **Romans 15:13**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

10/01/2021 **Romans 12:12**

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

17/01/2021 **Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24/01/2021 **Philippians 4:4**

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

31/01/2021 **James 1:2**

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

February — Faith: *complete trust or confidence in someone or something*

07/02/2021 **Ephesians 2:8**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

14/02/2021 **Hebrews 11:1**

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

21/02/2021 **Romans 5:1**

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

28/02/2021 **Hebrews 11:6**

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

March — Wisdom: *having experience, knowledge, and good judgment*

/07/03/2021 **James 1:5**

14/03/2021 **Colossians 3:16**

21/03/2021 **2 Timothy 3:15**

28/03/2021 **Proverbs 1:7**

April — Unity: *being united or joined as a whole*

04/04/2021 **1 Corinthians 12:12**

11/04/2021 **Ephesians 4:13**

18/04/2021 **Ephesians 4:3**

25/04/2021 **John 17:23**

May — Perseverance: *doing something despite difficulty*

02/05/2021 **Hebrews 12:1**

09/05/2021 2 Peter 1:6

16/05/2021 Romans 5:3

23/05/2021 2Thessalonians 1:4

30/05/2021 James 1:3

June — Honesty: *quality of being honest*

06/06/2021 Hebrews 13:18

13/06/2021 2Kings 12:15

20/06/2021 1Timothy 2:2

27/06/2021 Genesis 30:33

July — Courage: *the ability to do something that frightens you*

04/07/2021 John 16:33

11/07/2021 Joshua 1:9

18/07/2021 Acts 4:13

25/07/2021 Hebrews 12:5

August — Understanding: *aware of other people's feelings, tolerant and forgiving*

01/08/2021 Proverbs 3:5

08/08/2021 2Timothy 3:15

15/08/2021 Ephesians 1:7-9

22/08/2021 Colossians 1:9

29/08/2021 2Peter 3:18

September — Hopefulness: *confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something*

05/09/2021 Hebrews 11:1

12/09/2021 Titus 2:13

19/09/2021 1Peter 3:15

26/09/2021 Isaiah 40:31

October — Rewards: *a thing given in recognition of one's service, effort, or achievement*

03/10/2021 Hebrews 11:6

10/10/2021 Revelation 22:12

17/10/2021 1Samuel 26:23

24/10/2021 Hebrews 12:2

31/10/2021 1Corinthians 9:24

November — Patience: *to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry*

07/11/2021 Galatians 5:22

14/11/2021 Hebrews 12:1

21/11/2021 Colossians 3:12

28/11/2021 Romans 15:3-5

December — Kindness: *quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate*

05/12/2021 1Peter 2:3

12/12/2021 Colossians 3:12

19/12/2021 2Corinthians 12:9

26/12/2021 2Peter 1:5-7

True repentance which will always include these 5 A's:

Acknowledgement of the wrong.

Apology for the wrong.

Action of determination to change.

Appreciation of God's forgiveness.

Attitude of grace, gratitude and gentleness towards God and people.



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