

***Hidden in the Gospel*** by William P. Farley (P & R Publishing, Philipsburg, NJ) 2014  
(67 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols).

### **1. The Intent Is To Help People “Feed on Jesus”**

This book is an attempt to help the reader connect some of the critical gospel doctrines with their application to daily life. In other words, this book is an attempt to help feed on Jesus by going deeper with the gospel. (Page 7)

### **2. The Lord’s Supper, Feeding on Jesus**

The body and blood of Christ represent the heart of the gospel event the cross of Christ. In other words, just as bread and wine sustain physical life, so eating Jesus’ body and drinking his blood sustains spiritual life. If I don’t eat bread, my body will die. If I don’t feed on Jesus, my spiritual life will die.

The context of Jesus command is the gospel. The bread is Christ’s body, broken on the cross. The wine is his shed blood. In other words, the Lord’s Supper is a reminder of what Jesus did for us, and we are at least committed to feed on it daily. (Page 7)

### **3. Coming to Really Know God through the Gospel**

First, they progressively get to know God—I mean really come to know him. The gospel makes God’s justice exquisite. The gospel glorifies his mercy and grace. The gospel makes God’s wrath terrible, but then God’s wrath makes the love of God inexpressible precious. The gospel; shows us the absolute sovereignty of God, but it does so without diminishing our responsibility. The gospel magnifies the horror of man’s sin but it salves that knowledge with God’s grace and compassion. (Page 8)

### **4. Preach to Ourselves**

We can either listen to ourselves—our fears, doubts, insecurities, hurts, and failures—or we can preach to ourselves. Maturing believers cultivate the discipline of preaching to themselves. In fact, they turn this into an art form. They read scripture, internalize it, and then continually preach its truths back to themselves. When fears of death and dying arise, they speak to themselves about the world to come. When guilt grips their heart, they remind themselves they have been united with Christ and that Christ’s righteousness is theirs. They don’t listen to self. They preach to self! (Page 9-10)

### **5. What It means to Preach The Gospel To Yourself**

In his book *The Discipline of Grace*. Jerry Bridges popularized Miller’s idea. Bridges exhorts his readers to preach the gospel to themselves. For Bridges, this means a solid focus on what happened at the cross.

To preach the gospel to yourself, then, means that you continually face up to your own sinfulness and then flee to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life. It means that you appropriate, again by faith, the fact that Jesus fully satisfied the law of

God, that He is your propitiation, and that God's holy wrath is no longer directed toward you. (Page 11)

## **6. Gospel Means “Good News” or “Euangelion” in Greek**

The English word *gospel* is a modernized version of the Middle English word *godspell*, meaning “good tale.” Going back further *godspell* is a translation of the New Testament Greek word *euangelion*, which means “good news,” usually as declared by an emperor to his subjects. The gospel is the declaration of what God—our sovereign King and Emperor—has done to rescue us from sin and its consequences, the wrath of God. (Page 12)

## **7. What God Has Done in Christ To Redeem The World.**

Using the term more broadly, the gospel is good news about all that God has done in Christ to save sinners and redeem the cosmos from the effect of sin. It includes our election before the foundation of the world. Christ's incarnation, his active obedience, his substitutionary death, his resurrection and ascension. Pentecost, and the final judgment. It also includes the hope of a new creation purged of sin and infused with the active presence of God. (Page 12)

## **8. Why the Gospel?**

Why the gospel and not some other truth? There is no subject more important to preach to oneself. It is the story line of Scripture. It is the central theme of the Bible. The Old Testament predicts and looks forward to the gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record the central facts of the gospel—Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Acts records the efforts of the early church to export the gospel. The Epistles explain and apply the gospel. The Bible is all about the gospel. (Page 13)

## **9. How God Achieves His Ultimate End**

It is through the gospel that God achieves his ultimate end. The glory of God is the ultimate end of all things, and the gospel is the means through which God glorifies himself. It is how he achieves his ends. (Page 13)

## **10. The Best to Mediate Is to Preach the Gospel to Yourself**

The best way to mediate is to preach the gospel to yourself regularly. “To behold the glory of Christ in the gospel is a discipline,” writes Jerry Bridges. “It is a habit we must develop by practice as we learn to preach the gospel to ourselves every day.” This is what Paul has in mind when he tells us to “seek the things that are above” and “set your mind on things that are above” (Col. 3:1-2). (Page 15)

## **11. Spiritual Wisdom Begs God for Humility**

Those with spiritual wisdom beg God to humble them. They know that most of God's riches flow through the funnel of humility. God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). What does grace look like? How does it come to us? Here are some examples:

intimacy with Christ (Isaiah 57:15), favor with God (Proverbs 3:34), exaltation by God (Psalm 147:6), salvation in the broadest sense (Matthew 5:3), and honor from God (Proverbs 15:33). These are all manifestations of God's grace to those growing in humility. "The good news of Jesus is not intended to make us feel good about ourselves" notes Ed Welch. "Instead, the good news humbles us. (Page 15)

## **12. Deliverance from the Three-Headed-monster**

Those who preach the gospel to themselves are most likely to gain deliverance from that three-headed-monster- guilt, inferiority, and low self-image. Here is the reason. The gospel is all about grace. Grace is reward given to those who deserve punishment. The gospel is the good news that God loves us not because of our virtues. He loves us in spite of their absence. The gospel is about divine power flowing through weak people. It is about the exaltation of God's wisdom through foolish people. It is about God using the lowly and despised to shame the important. In other words, the gospel is for the needy, the guilty, and those who feel inferior. The gospel increasingly dissolves guilt, inferiority, and despair in the solvent of God love. (Page 15-16)

## **13. Christian People Abounding in Thanksgiving**

Those who repeatedly preach the gospel to themselves are increasingly "abounding in thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6). Why? The gospel shows us what we deserve—judgment. But, here is the good news because of the gospel, we will never get what we deserve. No matter how bad our circumstances are, this truth will make us overflow with gratitude. The gospel reminds us that Christians are not getting, and will never get, what they deserve. Believers who preach the gospel to themselves understand this. Therefore, they are increasingly thankful, and thankful people are joyful people. (Page 16)

## **14. Election & Grace**

One of the big themes of Ephesians is grace. That is why Paul begins this letter with election. Grace is unmerited favor. It is reward given to those who deserve judgment. Grace means that Christ takes the punishment we deserve, so that we can get the reward that Christ deserves. We don't get in on this by being better or trying harder. It is God's gift, and it is his gift to those who have no claim on his electing love. (Page 23)

## **15. God Is the Sovereign King**

God does not elect one over another because of how good they have been. He delights in one over another just because he has decided to do so. He is the sovereign King. He owes us no explanation, and he gives us none. Election, in this view, is all of grace. (Page 24)

## **16. God Chooses Us despite Any Foreseen Goodness**

This understanding is called “unconditional” election. God’s choosing is not based on any condition, any foreseen goodness (i.e., a decision to believe) in the one chosen. Just the opposite. God chooses us despite the complete absence of foreseen goodness. He chooses us not because he foresees goodness in us. He chooses to produce goodness in us. (Page 24)

## **17. The Doctrine of Election Contains the Whole Gospel**

Past generations have understood it this way. In the words of a seventeenth-century Puritan, “The doctrine of election containeth the whole sum and scope of the gospel.” And, in the words of a contemporary, Iain Murray, “The whole of the work of Christ, is therefore to be understood in relation to the doctrine of election, and indeed....it cannot be understood without it. (Page 25)

## **18. Divine Election & Human Responsibility**

What about human responsibility? If God elects certain individuals before the foundation of the world—if those who will be saved have been determined in advance—then why pray or evangelize? Here is another mystery—the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. If you remove the face of an old pocket watch, you will observe a set of moving wheels. Some are moving clockwise, some are moving counterclockwise. At first glance, it appears that the watch is working against itself. Yet the contrary movements work together to produce an accurate timepiece.

The workings of divine sovereignty and human responsibility are similar. Both are true. God is in total control. Not one sparrow falls from the bush nor one hair from the head that God has not both foreseen and brought to pass (Matthew 10:29-30). Yet at the same time we make real choices that change things, and for them we will give an account on the day of judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Humble Christians are willing to live with mystery. God is infinite. So there must be huge areas that are beyond comprehension. Like the wheels in the watch, two concepts run through the Bible on parallel tracks—the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Both are true. Although we cannot understand them, they are theologically compatible. Theologians call this the doctrine of compatibilism. (Page 26-27)

## **19. Election Crucial To Knowledge of God**

Election is crucial to the knowledge of God and your capacity to rest in God’s grace. (Page 27)

## **20. Unconditional vs. Conditional Security**

In other words, unconditional election promotes security. Conditional election promotes insecurity and restlessness. God’s unconditional electing love is the basis for the following famous text:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39) (Page 28-29)

### **21. Unconditional Election is the Key**

Unconditional election is our security. Unconditional election is the key that helps us plumb the depths of God's glory. Unconditional election is an exercise of God's free and unmerited grace, mercy, and love.

On the basis of the Father's election, the Son came to save those whom he had chosen from before the foundation of the world. In other words, election is the sure foundation of gospel grace, of our conviction that God's love is unconditional. (Page 29)

### **22. New Birth Brings a Desire to Turn From Sin**

This teaching is not a license for sin. That is because the first sign of new birth is a longing for holiness and profound desire to turn from sin. Christians are citizens of God's kingdom. They delight in God's authority. In fact, an ongoing apathy about obedience might be a sign that a professing Christian has not experienced new birth. (Page 29)

### **23. Election, a Humbling Cure**

When we feel discouraged, guilty, or inadequate, the doctrine of election is a sure tonic. When we feel proud and tempted to look down on others, the doctrine of election is the humbling cure. (Page 30)

### **24. Salvation Needed**

Pride is a problem. We are born with Original Sin. Its source is Adam. Pride is the heart and soul of sin. It affects us constantly, mostly in ways of which we are not aware. (Page 35)

### **25. The Lust for Self-Exaltation**

The fundamental problem of the human family has been the lust for self-exaltation, coupled with dissatisfaction with who and what we are. It dominates us from the moment of conception. (Page 36)

### **26. Self-Pity & Pride the Are Same**

"But what about those who are caught up in self-pity, who are self-absorbed with a sense of failure?" asks Stuart Scott. "This too is pride. They are just on the flip side of the pride 'coin.' People who are consumed with self-pity are focusing on their own selves too much." (Page 36)

### **27. Self-Exaltation Seeks Self-Divinity**

This incarnation is not a doctrine that anyone would dream up. All the tendencies of our sinful nature run the other way—toward self-exaltation. When we invent gods, they are like us. That is why the gods of ancient Greeks, Romans, and so on were selfish, self-exalting and self-obsessed. The prose on an old Christmas card said it best: many men have claimed to be God but only once has God descended to become man. Think of the Caesars, the Pharaohs, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and most New Age seers. They all seek divinity. But the incarnation turns all this on its head. God lowered himself, utterly emptied himself, and became man! (Page 37)

### **28. God Made Himself in Man's Image**

“In the creation,” wrote Thomas Watson (1620-1686), “man was made in God's image: in the incarnation God was made in man's image.” (Page 41)

### **29. Disobedience to God Expresses Pride**

All disobedience to God expresses pride, just as all obedience expresses humility. (Page 44)

### **30. Infinitely Holy God's Fix for Infinitely Serious Pride**

Jesus' incarnation was an infinite step down. This was necessary because our sinful pride is against an infinitely holy God. Therefore, it is infinitely serious. As a result, an infinite decent by Jesus was necessary to atone for my infinitely serious pride. (Page 44)

### **31. Jesus Took the Humiliation & Gave Us His Exaltation**

He took the humiliation that proud, rebellious sinners deserve, so that we could get the exaltation he deserves. This is a source of great joy and gladness for proud sinners who believe the gospel.

To the despairing, this means hope and joy. (Page 45)

### **32. Believing the Gospel Unites Us with Christ**

When people believe the gospel, their faith unites them to Christ. In God's eyes, they become all that Christ is and was. This allows us to share both in Christ's humiliation and in his exaltation. (Page 50)

### **33. Christ Is the Only Perfectly Righteous Person Who Ever Lived**

The active obedience of Christ is his life of sinless perfection, his righteousness, imputed to the Christian. He is the only person who ever earned God's favor by performing or working. Christ is the only perfectly righteous person who have ever lives. (Page 50-51)

### **34. How to Get Perfection**

The only way one can get perfection is through the imputation of Christ's righteousness—what Machen called his active obedience. Theologians call this an alien righteousness. By "alien" they mean it is not something we produce. It comes from outside of us. Christ earned it, and he freely, graciously and joyfully gives it to those who believe the gospel. (Page 51)

### **35. Christ Satisfied the Old Testament Law**

God did not take away the Old Testament law. He satisfied it. God did not relax his standard of perfection. Rather, his Son fulfilled it. The law did not go away. On the day of judgment, God will still measure all men by his law. But here is the good news. Jesus obeyed God's law perfectly. When we believe the gospel, God unites us with Christ in such a way that his obedience is imputed to us. Now, on the basis of Christ's performance, not our own, God considers us to have satisfied his law. In other words, God gives us the gift of Christ's righteousness and the gift does not wax or wane with our performance. It is no wonder that Luther thought he had "gone through open doors into paradise." (Page 53)

### **36. Christ's Active Obedience Becomes Ours**

When we believe the gospel, God imputes Christ's passion for God's glory to us. His active obedience becomes ours. (Page 54)

### **37. God Imputes Jesus' Perfect Love for His Father to Us As Believers**

"I always do what pleases Him" (John 8:29 NIV). My food is to do the will of Him who sent me" (John 4:34). Here is the good news. When we believe, God imputes Christ's keeping of the Ten Commandments to us. He also imputes Christ's perfect love for his Father to us. His active obedience becomes ours. (Page 55)

### **38. Jesus Forgave Lavishly, He Loved Perfectly Both Sexes**

Jesus is our forgiveness. He forgave lavishly. He is our love for enemies. He died for his enemies. He is our sexual purity. He loved both the opposite sex and his own sex properly. He is our contentment. He never coveted. He is our faith. He trusted God perfectly.

All this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians, "And because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, *righteousness* and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor1:30-31) (Page 55)

### **39. Jesus Saved By Fulfilling the Law**

This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have not come to abolish them but to *fulfill* them" (Matt. 5:7). Jesus did

not save us by abolishing the law. He saved us by fulfilling it. The term that describes that work of fulfillment is Christ's active obedience. (Page 56)

#### **40. No More Earning Righteousness for Us but Believing in Messiah**

Under the old covenant a believer had to earn righteousness through personal effort. God gave the law to the Jews to convince them that this was an impossible task (Romans 3:20: 5:20: 7:13). Therefore the Old Testament saints received salvation, just as we do, by putting their trust in the Messiah to come. Our union with Christ in his active obedience means that the demands of God's law have been satisfied by him on our behalf. (Page 56)

#### **41. Our Responsibility, Love God & Man**

So what is our responsibility? Are we free to live according to the whims and passions of our selfish desires? No! Paul sums up God's simple requirements in Galatians 5:6 with the words "faith works through love." In other words, believe the gospel and express that faith by sacrificially loving God and man. (Page 56)

#### **42. Don't Look Down on Your Neighbor**

When tempted to look down on someone else, we need to preach the truth of this chapter to ourselves. It might go something like this:

Father the standard is perfection. I am a million miles away from this. I live by faith in Christ's righteousness imputed to me. I have no saving virtues in which to boast. I am deeply humbled by the gospel. I am a fellow sinner, a beggar pleading for grace, just like this person I am tempted to look down on. (Page 57)

#### **43. Seek Goodness—Rest In the Truth**

Seek goodness with all your heart, but rest in the truth that, because of Christ's active obedience, God will accept your best efforts even though they are imperfect. (Page 57)

#### **44. Preach the Active Obedience of Christ to Yourself**

So what would it look like to preach the active obedience of Christ to oneself? Here is an example.

Father, I am a great sinner. I am utterly incapable of satisfying the demands of your law. You sent your Son to do what I cannot do. You sent him to fulfill the demands of your law. My faith in the gospel has united me with your Son. It has imputed his active obedience to me. I am now free from the law's demands. To relate to you. I don't need to be perfect. Why? All my failings—past, and future—are buried out of sight under the active obedience of Christ.

Hallelujah! (Page 58-59)

#### **45. Breaking God's Law Makes Us Guilty in God's Sight**

Ultimately, however, our feelings have little to do with it. Whether we feel guilty or not, when we break God's law, we are in fact guilty, and we will give an accounting to God for those thoughts or actions on the day of judgment.

God sent his Son to solve our guilt problem. He did this by fully punishing our sins, removing them far from his sight (Ps. 100:12). On the day of judgement the sins of those who have believed the gospel will not be remembered. (Page 63)

#### **46. Sin Punished**

Our sins will not be remembered because two wonderful things happen when we believe the gospel. First, God imputes Christ's active obedience to us. Second, God imputes all our sins to Christ. He gets the punishment that our sins deserve. We call the combination of those two truths the doctrine of double imputation. Christ imputes his righteousness to us, and our sins get imputed to Christ. (Page 64)

#### **47. How God Dissolves Sin**

This is how God dissolves guilt. He makes sin more serious in order to make his love more amazing, and ultimately this causes us to surrender our efforts at self-atonement. (Page 64)

#### **48. Expiation of Sin**

God has removed our sin away from himself. Expiation is the word that describes this process. It means that he has covered them or removed them from his sight. In the words of Psalm 103:12, he has removed our sin from us "as far as the east is from the west." That is an immense distance. (Page 65)

#### **49. To Be Unholy Is Not Necessarily Sinful**

God's love is a holy love. The opposite of holiness is commonness. To be unholy is not necessarily to be sinful. It is to be common. It is to be like the world we live in. Therefore, to be holy is to be set apart from the world, to be different, to transcend the world, its values, and its customs. (Page 67)

#### **50. Jesus Died For His Enemies**

So here is the love of God. Jesus Christ gave himself to be slowly tortured to death on a cross. He did this not for his friends, but for his enemies. He did this to make his enemies his friends. Nothing compelled him. He owed us nothing but justice. Yet, despite this he suffered infinite pain to extend amazing grace to us. God's love is a passionate desire for our happiness. It is our happiness at his expense. He incurred the expense in order to feel and express affection for us. (Page 68)

### **51. Preach God's Love to Oneself**

Here is an example of what it might look like to preach God's love to myself. "God loves me. How do I know? Look what he did for me. It matters little how I feel. God has declared his love with action." It is either true or it is not. There's no middle ground. Nothing can separate a true believer from God's love (Rom. 8:39), not even the believer's sin and failing. (Page 69)

### **52. Jared's Prayer**

Father, thank you for sending your Son to forgive an unworthy sinner. Thank you for loving me with an infinite love. Jesus took the punishment that my sins deserve so that I could receive the eternal reward that his virtues deserve. Thank you for removing my sins from your sight. Thank you for loving me with deeds, not just words. Thank you for the atoning death of Jesus Christ which makes an affectionate relationship between us possible. Thank you for acting to secure my forgiveness. (Page 70)

### **53. Christ's Resurrection Conquered Death**

Christ's resurrection has conquered death. It began what Peter called the "restoration of all things: (Acts 3:21 NKJV). That includes the restoration of immortality. Growing Christian do not listen to their nagging fears about death. They preach the resurrection to themselves.

Paul was convinced that Christ's resurrection was "according to the scriptures.' He wrote:

"For I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3-4) (Page 74)

### **54. A Description of Our Resurrected Bodies**

What will our new bodies be like? Our best guess is that they will appear somewhat normal. Jesus arose with a resurrection body. He appeared to his disciples off and on for forty days. During that time they recognized him. They touched him. They watched him eat food.

In addition, in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, Paul gives us several facts about our resurrection bodies. First, he tells us that our new bodies will be raised imperishable. In other words, they will be unable to die or decay. In addition, he tells us that they will be raised in glory. This means that we will share the glory of Christ in our bodies. Then he tells us they will be raised in power. They will not be weak, but powerful in a way that we cannot now imagine. Last, he tells us that they will be raised as "spiritual" bodies—that is, connected with both the spiritual and the physical worlds in a way that we do not now experience. These are general descriptions.

We long for more specifics. What does Paul mean by "power"? What does he mean by "spiritual" bodies? We don't know, but someday we will. (Page 80)

### **55. Hell vs. Heaven—Horrible vs. Joyful**

What makes hell so horrible is that it is experienced in the body. The torments are physical as well as social, mental, and spiritual. And what makes heaves so wonderful is that it is also experienced in the body. The pleasures and joys are physical as well as social, mental, and spiritual. (Page 80)

### **56. Believer's Life vs. Unbelievers Life**

For believers, this life is as bad as it is ever going to get, but for unbelievers, this life is as good as it is ever going to get. (Page 81)

### **57. Death Is Ugly—Resurrection Is Beautiful**

When trouble comes, don't listen to yourself. The self will look at circumstances and preach despair, hopelessness, and discouragement. Instead, talk back to yourself. Preach the hope of the resurrection.

Death is ugly, and unpleasant, but the truth of Christ's resurrection is beautiful and encouraging. It dilutes the horror of death. It removes its sting. (Page 81-82)

### **58. The Forgotten Doctrine**

The future of nations and cultures often turns on single unnoticed details, quickly forgotten, which in retrospect prove decisive. Such was the papal election of 1550. It was one of the great turning points of church history and therefore of world history.

In his book *The Reformation*, Diarmaid MacCulloch tells the story of how an English cardinal was almost elected pope. Thirty-three years after the beginning of the Reformation, the battle over biblical authority and interpretation had split medieval Europe into Protestant and Catholic camps. However, many Roman Catholic bishops and cardinals sympathized with the Reformation regarding the authority of the Bible and the crucial disputed doctrine, justification by faith alone. In addition, they wanted to heal the schism with the Lutherans. One of these men was Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-1558).

Pole was a wealthy aristocratic Englishman who had fled to Italy to escape persecution from his relative, King Henry VIII. Known for his piety, his desire to reform the church, and his deep sincerity, he was respected by all. In 1537, Pope Paul III elevated to cardinal. As such, Pole attended the Council of Trent as one of the pope's three delegates. However, when the Council pronounced its anathema against justification by faith alone, Pole walked out and never returned.

As Pope Paul III lay dying, he asked the College of Cardinals to elect Pole as his replacement. In the first vote, Pole fell four votes short of two-thirds required. After the second ballot, Pole was only one vote short, but that was as close as he would get. With each subsequent ballot, the English cardinal lost ground. Finally the College

of Cardinals elected Julius III a, civil servant to replace Paul III. They came within one vote of electing an English pope who was sympathetic to the Reformers. Had Pole been elected, who knows how church history would have changed? Having rejected Pole's possibly conciliatory leadership, the Catholic Church hardened its position following the excesses of the Council of Trent.

Why did God allow this? Was God asleep? Did he not care? Did he lack authority to change things? The doctrine of this ascension speaks to those doubters and more. (Page 85-86)

### **59. The Overlooked Doctrine**

The doctrine of ascension is indispensable. Without the ascension of Christ, there would be no salvation. Without it, there would be no hope for the future. That is, there would be no assurance that God controls our lives and our future. Without this ascension, history would be capricious and meaningless. (Page 86)

### **60. His Ascension Is the Key to Our Salvation**

Augustine (354-430), one of history's most influential thinkers, wrote that Ascension Day "confirms the grace of all the festivals together [Christmas and Easter], without which the profitableness of every festival would have perished. For unless the Savior had ascended into heaven, his Nativity would have come to nothing ... and the Passion would have born no fruit for us, and his most holy Resurrection would have been useless." (Page 86-87)

### **61. Jesus Intercedes For Us (Rom. 8:34)**

Christ's intercession also puts a dent in condemnation. "Who is to condemn?" asks the apostle Paul. "Christ Jesus is the one who died—more that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who is indeed is interceding for us" (Romans 8:34). Do you get the drift of Paul's logic? The one who loved you so much that he gave himself up to a brutal death is the same intercessor who is at God's right hand pleading for you. He didn't ascend into heaven to condemn you. Christ cannot condemn you and intercede for you at the same time. (Page 89)

### **62. Christ Does Not Always Pray For Us to Have an Easy Life**

We should note that Christ is not necessarily praying that you and I will have an easy life. Sometimes he prays for painful circumstances. Why? Because he loves us. He disciplines the sons whom he loves. He disciplines us to expand our capacity for future glory. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison (2 Cor. 4:17). Notice the afflictions are light and momentary, but the glory is weighty and eternal. The more you exercise a muscle, the larger it gets. The more you stretch a balloon, the larger its capacity becomes. The more a Christian suffers with his eyes on Christ, the more God expands his capacity for future glory. (Page 89-90)

### **63. Good and/or Evil Are No Accident**

The dominion of that God created the first Adam to exercise, the second Adam now possesses, and he possesses it because of his infinite descent.

This is good news! It means that the one who intercedes for us is the sovereign. He has the power to bring to pass all his requests. This means that nothing in time and space is an accident. The vote in the College of Cardinals that failed to elect Reginald Pole was no accident. It happened that way because Christ was interceding. When a child contracts cancer, it is no accident. Christ brings all things to pass through his high priestly intercessory work. And he means it all for the ultimate good of his saints. When the stock market collapses, it is no accident. Should world War III start tomorrow, it will be no accident.

Some would answer that God is too good to bring painful events to pass. But that flies in the face of Scripture. Remember, the Devil had to get God's permission to afflict Job (Job 1:6-12), and Job didn't blame his suffering on the Devil. Instead, he said "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away" (Job 1:21). Then he asked, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil? (Job 2:10). Jeremiah adds, "It is not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?" (Lam. 3:38). And the prophet Amos writes, "Does disaster come to a city, unless the Lord has done it? (Amos 3:6). "I form light and create darkness," wrote Isaiah "I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord who does all these things" (Isa. 45:7). Yet the opposite is also true. God never tempts us or incites us to evil (James 1:13-15). (Page 92)

### **64. Christ's Ascension Changed Life & History**

Because of the ascension, life and history have meaning. As I write these words, our culture is changing. People are anxious. Some are fearful. What does the future hold? But Christ's ascension proclaims the truth that history is going somewhere. It is purposeful. There are no accidents. A good and holy Savior is in control, and he is working all things according to the counsel of his will. After the Democratic party won a local election, a friend who understands this well said, "I voted for the Republican, but God voted for the Democrat."

In the end, Christ will subdue all his enemies. The second Adam is doing what the first Adam failed to do. He is exercising God's dominion on earth. The cross is the signature of that authority. Christ is a servant-ruler. (Page 93)

### **65. A Sermon to Preach To Yourself**

Preach to yourself. Don't listen to yourself. Don't listen to your fears, your anxieties, and your many doubts. When your self says that God is against you, when self mutters that life is out of control, respond by preaching something like this to yourself:

Father, Thank you for sending your Son to be my great High Priest. Thank you for receiving his shed blood on my behalf. Thank you for giving him all power and authority over my circumstances. Thank you for listening to his intercessions on my behalf. Now I rest in your goodness and the absolute sovereignty that you entrusted to your Son. I trust you for the past. I trust you for the future. I have nothing to fear. Christ intercedes for me at your right hand, and he is always for me. He is never against me. (Page 94-95)

### **66. Christ Will Establish His Kingly Authority on Earth**

Christ may or may not come in our lifetime, but he will come eventually, and when he does, it will be to establish his kingly authority on earth. It will happen when we least expect it and it will radically interrupt the predictability of life. (Page 98)

### **67. Christ Must Return For a Happy Ending**

It is easy to doubt Christ's return. Because it will involve the overturning of nature's laws, to many it seems fantastic.