

XXXII. L.E.A.D in Biblical Perspective
Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship
“Foundations #5 – True Worship and True Worshipers”
Hebrews 2:5–18
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This is the Word of God, inspired, inerrant and infallible. Hebrews 2:5–18 says [5] *For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. [6] It has been testified somewhere,*

*“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?”*

[7] *You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,*

[8] *putting everything in subjection under his feet.”*

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. [9] But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

[10] *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. [11] For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, [12] saying,*

*“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”*

[13] *And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again,
“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”*

[14] *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

[16] *For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.*

[17] *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

There is a distinct phrase in the Bible that when you hear it read you probably think a certain thing. The phrase is when Jesus says ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant.’ I know I’ll never be a profitable servant but oh how I want to hear those words and I would guess you probably wish to hear those words too. Our Lord has sent us into this world as ambassadors for Christ. He has called you to give praise to His name, to serve Him and He has given you this mission in life that Christ is all and in all. I will be preaching a series in this coming year on this where life is the stewardship of Christ, but having said that I think churches ought to be the same way.

I think a church wants to hear ‘well done thou good and faithful servant.’ Another way to say this would be ‘mission accomplished.’ What is that mission? I have tried to give this time and time again. I don’t want Christ’s church in general and Briarwood in particular to be guilty of mission drift. I don’t want the pressures of the culture and the idea of relevance to get us off our mission. I want us to stay on mission, on message and in ministry. Jesus says in John 20:21, [21] *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”* The Father sent Him to seek and to save the lost and that’s what our mission is.

He puts it very succinctly in passages that we’re all familiar with. Passages like Matthew 28:18–20 which says [18] *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* This is our mission – preaching to all the nations, evangelizing and discipling – and I want us to hear ‘well done good and faithful servant.’ We don’t want to be distracted from it but we want to stay on that mission.

The message He gave us is the Gospel of Jesus Christ embedded in the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) teaching them to observe all that He has commanded us. So we are on mission of evangelism and discipleship. We are on message which means we’re in ministry and there are four ministries I have given to you for us to accomplish the mission. One is the ministry of upreach which is our worship to God. Second, the ministry of outreach is evangelism which is our ministry to the world. Thirdly, is the ministry of inreach which is loving one another. Lastly, is the ministry of downreach which is growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, being discipled and discipling.

In order to help us stay on mission we have looked at something that has been embedded in our history which is the development of a discipleship curriculum that goes to foundational issues. Now there are a lot of sophisticated dynamics in discipleship but you don’t want to build on the intricacies of a superstructure without putting down the right foundations. There are five foundational elements of discipleship. So the first foundational element is to understand Christianity 101 – understanding sound doctrine and sound words. It is the knowing the Gospel in which all the rest of the doctrines depend upon. Secondly, is knowing the public and private disciplines of grace which is how we grow day by day. This leads to the third foundational element which is learning to live a life of stewardship. This is knowing how to be a good steward for the Lord in all my relationships, abilities and with all my resources. This is where the ‘well done good and faithful servant’ comes in. The fourth element is evangelism, where everyone evangelizing everybody everyday everywhere.

In this study we come to the fifth foundational element which is the capstone and the foundation stone. It is true worship and this is why God made us – to the praise of His glory. Why does He save us? He saves us to praise of His glorious grace. This is why God gave you the heartbeat you feel right now. [6] *Let everything that has **breath** praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!* (Psalm 150:6) God created you, saved you and sustains you to worship Him.

The title of this study came from the John 4 text where Jesus is evangelizing the woman at the well. After Jesus showed the woman her sin the woman poses an interesting question about worship but she should have gone to confession of sin saying “Jesus against Thee and Thee only I have sinned in which You have pointed out my sin, thank You!” She did go to something that Jesus went ahead and answered.

We see this in John 4:19–24 which says, [19] *The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” [21] Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. [24] God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

Jesus is saying that the Old Covenant is where they worshipped in order to use externals to teach them of the essence of worship and now that the New Covenant has come worship is not defined by the externals but by the internals – spiritual worship is to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Two times Jesus says the Father seeks worshippers and it’s the only thing in the Bible that it says the Lord seeks – true worshippers. To be a true worshipper I have to give true worship which means there is also false worship. I don’t want to be a false worshipper and give false worship so what is true worship? So in the New Covenant it’s not defined by where like in the Old Covenant but it’s defined by who, how, and what you do in worship. Who do you worship?

Everybody worships for everyone was made to worship. So the question is not ‘do people worship?’ but the question is ‘who are people worshipping?’ Is it true worship? The first point of true worship is who and it must be God. You don’t worship, worship. This is one of the big mistakes in the contemporary evangelical church today. We are to worship God – the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then you move from who you worship to how you worship – you worship from the inside out, in spirit. That part of you that was made in the image of God that requires the work of the Holy Spirit to enliven. It is that which was dead that was brought to life through saving grace which shows up in worship. Psalm 103:1 says [1] *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!*

I commend you to go read the chapter on worship in the Westminster Confession for it is glorious! In it, it says worship is not where for it can take place in your family worship, in your home, in your time with the Lord, outside and inside. It also takes place in the public assembly of God’s people which is not to be neglected or forsaken and it is what you do in worship. It’s not imagination. Everything we do in our corporate worship has been directly, proactively commanded by the Lord in His Word. Now He doesn’t tell us the order or how much time to give to each element of our service but He tells us in His Word what to do.

I Timothy 4:13 says [13] *Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.* It is absolutely astounding to me how much the reading of Scripture has been absent from contemporary worship. Ephesians 5:19 says [19] *address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.* I Corinthians 16:2 says [2] *On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper* which is the tithe and offerings in worship as He says in Malachi 3:10, [10] *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.* We are to confess our sins to one another and some of this is done through our common confession of truth during our worship service.

All of these things are directly commanded from the Lord and that is what we are to do in worship, not by what we make up in our images. We worship in spirit and truth and Thy Word is

truth (John 17:17). This for Christian thrills their heart because they are doing what the Lord wants them to do. I am to worship Him with all that is within me for nothing is held back. I also know that true worship is what gives vent to everyday worship for gathered worship is what sets the temperature for daily worship. So the true worship given by true worshippers then moves forward.

The Greek word for worship is 'latría' and the wrong/false worship is 'idolatria' which is where we get idolatry from. Right worship is God-centered, God invested, God dwelt, God focused, God exalting. We don't have a worship service for evangelism for that's a consequence of worship. We don't have a worship service to instruct you for that is a consequence of worship. We have a worship service to bless the name of the Lord that He will be high, exalted and lifted up. The consequences are that lost people get saved, and God's people get instructed, equipped and encouraged. Another consequence when we worship is we get blessed but we gather to bless His name.

In this passage from Hebrews 2 we can see that the writer is very concerned for the people because they remember the temple, sacrifices, ceremonies and circumstances around that but now where do they find themselves in houses? They don't have that pomp and circumstance they had in the Old Covenant. It is not to be done in morbidity but reverence. It is to be done with joy and not triviality. Only God's Spirit can do joy and reverence at the same time. Even the inanimate objects in heaven have enough sense to tremble in the presence of God, yet the angels are overflowing with joy. So we long to have that worship.

The writer of Hebrews is telling the people to quit looking back to the shadows, types and the way Moses and Aaron did things for the fulfillment has come and now we have the Substance instead of the symbols. We no longer have the prophecy but the Prophesied One. No longer are there the types but now we have the One typified. No longer do they have Moses but One greater than Moses. No longer do they have David but a greater King. No longer priests for we have the great high Priest. We have a greater Prophet, Priest and King for the old has passed away and the new has come. The old was foundational but we have Jesus therefore fix your eyes on Him. Hebrews 12:2 says *[2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Then the writer of Hebrews brings us to this matter of worship. He tells us what Jesus has done to bring New Covenant worship – who, what (according to truth), how (from the soul and spirit) and Whom brings this worship. Who are the true worshippers? They are those who Jesus has bought, brought and will present to His Father. This passage in Hebrews has seven affirmations that will, if understood, change your Lord's Day worship and then through that change your daily lifestyle of worship.

The first affirmation is Christ came for us. Christ came to us. Christ took upon Himself humanity. Christ had already come in the Old Covenant and we call those Christofanies but they were appearances of Christ. Now this leads me to the second affirmation.

Secondly, Christ became one of us. He bears a glorified human body forever and it all began over 2000 years ago – Immanuel, meaning God with us. The angels said He was coming. The prophets said He was coming. The prophecies said He was coming. Everything in the Old Testament said He was coming and now Christ has come to be among us. Philippians 2:6–8 says *[6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of*

men. [8] *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

He came to us to become one of us. I Corinthians 15:21 tells us why He became one of us which says [21] *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* I Timothy 2:5–6 says [5] *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.* His deity was not lost. It was not set aside. He is the Son of God but He is humbled by taking upon Himself humanity. Why? This leads to the third affirmation.

The third affirmation is Christ has come to save us. He came to take our place. Remember in the Old Covenant lamb after lamb and thousands were slain yet all of that was happening and been done by priests who needed their own sacrifice. This would happen year after year and this was shouting ‘the wages of sin is death’ so for you to be saved somebody has to die in your place yet the blood of bulls, goats and lambs can’t do it. But now Jesus has come and He is the Mediator. He cannot only bring the sacrifice of the Lamb, He is the Lamb.

Hebrews 2:17 says [17] *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to **make propitiation for the sins of the people.*** Propitiation means it was a satisfactory sacrifice and because it was satisfactory the Lamb can say ‘It’s finished!’ The Old Covenant told us what was needed and now the job has been done as the writer of Hebrews says. Worthy is the Lamb to open the seals and unfold the scroll of our salvation. The first three affirmations are in the past tense and because of the text we are now in the present.

The fourth affirmation is Christ gathers us. This is what He does with those whom He saves. There is much one can say about the people of God – we’re an army, a body, a field, a temple, but it’s unmistakable what is being said in this Hebrews 2 text. Christ gathers His children and He brings them to the Father. The writer of Hebrews mentions the term brothers twice in Hebrews 2:11 and 12 and refers to God’s people also as children in Hebrews 2:14. He gathers His family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. You can choose your friends but you don’t choose your family. God gives you your family. That is true in your own family and in the family of God. Every Lord’s Day is a family reunion. Every Lord’s Day is a thanksgiving day. Every Lord’s Day is the gathering of the people of God by the Savior.

As the pastor of this church, when I stand up to give the call to worship each Lord’s Day, it’s not me. It is Jesus by His Spirit and His Word. He says ‘I will gather My family.’ I didn’t call you nor the Briarwood session for we were just being obedient as to what Christ said to do in His Word, but it’s Jesus who calls you to worship. So many times there are people here who are not even here to hear Him but it is the Savior who cries out ‘Come let us worship!’ He is calling His family together. There is one TV program my wife and I watch when we get the opportunity. It is called Blue Bloods. On the show, every Sunday the family sits down together at this table undistracted at 2 pm. What God says is that Jesus calls you to sit with Him at the banquet of grace to feast upon Him in worship every Lord’s Day undistracted. His family gathers at His call and command – come and worship into the presence of the Lord.

The fifth affirmation is Christ leads us. Hebrews 2:12 says *“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”* Recently some young pastors asked me who the worship leaders were at our church here at Briarwood. I think if many of you were asked that question about your church you name off the pastor, the song leader, perhaps the choir, the organist and or the pianist. I hope you don’t ever answer that way from this point on after what we have studied here for Jesus is the One who leads us in worship. He

not only sings over us according to Zephaniah 3:17 but He sings with us and He leads us in our singing of His praise.

Since I'm not very musical I am very dependent upon a worship leader to instruct me and inspire me when to sing in a song so I'm grateful that God does this through human beings, but it's not them for it's Jesus by the Holy Spirit with His Word who is leading us in worship. Jesus is our liturgist, the worship Leader at the Divine service of worship on the Lord's Day and He is the One who came for you, became one of us, who saved you at the cross and gathers you. He now leads you in praise of the Father.

The sixth affirmation is Christ speaks to us. Hebrews 12:2 says 'I will tell your name to my brothers...' In the preaching from the majesty of the glory of God's Word, it's not the preacher who preaches but it's Christ Himself. This is why Paul refers to the people receiving the Word of the Lord (or Word of God) and not the word of man in I Thessalonians 1:6-8. It's just like the Bible where God uses human authors to speak His Word, God uses worship leaders for Jesus Himself to lead you and God uses preachers for Jesus Himself to speak to you. That's why it says in Romans 10:13-14, [13] *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* [14] *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*

That's why the Reformers would wear the black gowns when they preached and we still use them some today. It was to block out the preacher. It's not the foolishness of the preacher that you are being saved but according to I Corinthians 1:21, [21] *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* It's the foolishness of the message preached whereby Christ Himself speaks to your heart and Jesus said that His sheep know His voice and they follow Him (John 10:27). That's the glorious moment when Christ Himself speaks to the hearts of His people. Then notice that now we go from the present tense to the future tense in this last affirmation.

The seventh affirmation is Christ will present us. The writer of Hebrews here was telling the people that the Old Testament was all about Jesus when he quotes Isaiah and the Psalms. Hebrews 2:13b says *And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."* Who will He present? He will present those whom He has gathered, led and spoken to. Who will He gather, lead and speak to? It is those He came to be one of, to save on the cross, the children of Abraham, not by the circumcision of the flesh but by the circumcision of the heart. Jesus says in John 6:38-40, [38] *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* [39] *And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day.* [40] *For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.* These people are the elect of God. You can see them on the Lord's Day for they gather by His call, they are led by worship and He speaks to them because He has saved them. That is what He does and how gloriously He does it. Then lastly He will present them to the Father.

Here is the takeaway from this study. This and every Lord's Day by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ Himself gathers those whom He came to save as the family of God to lead us, to speak to us, and present us to the Father. Jesus is our Worship Leader. Then He speaks to us through His Word and then on that glorious day He will present us to the Father.

A little over 20 years ago my wife and I praying about whether God was calling us to Birmingham and there were a lot of things we were trying to do, with some not being all that important but yet they were on our heart. One of the things on my heart was that all my family had been raised in Charlotte, North Carolina where we had planted Christ Covenant Church and my children were there. I figured that is where my children were going to be. I told my wife that if God calls us to Birmingham you know what that will mean. It meant we would probably get to see our children and grandchildren a couple of times a year. I figured my wife would certainly say 'no' but she was the first one. We knew that maybe our immediate family wouldn't be as accessible but when we get to Birmingham we'll have family – the family of God.

My brothers and sisters, whom Jesus has saved, given to Him by the Father, this is our family. Little did I know that my children and grandchildren would end up here. The boomers do raise the boomerangs, praise the Lord! On top of that my sister, her husband and their children ended up coming here. So I praise the Lord for all of that blessing but we had no idea that would happen. But we knew we would still have family. It's God's family. Every Lord's Day it's a family reunion for those who are gathered by His voice, who want to be led by Jesus the Worship Leader, who want to hear Him through the inadequate but committed preaching of His Word.

There is coming a day and I can't wait for that glorious day, as a great spiritual song says 'that great gettin' up morning.' On that day there will be a loud voice and a trumpet and His people are going to hear that Voice and He will gather them into the eternal worship service. The people who will hear that trumpet and that Voice are those you will see every Lord's Day for they come to hear His Voice and trumpet His praises. Realize you can go to a worship service and not be saved. We pray about how to properly present guest preachers, speakers or singers.

How can I present to the world in evangelism? When you get a hold of this worship you'll start worshipping Him by proclaiming His name every day in evangelism. Our gathered worship is thermostat worship for that is what it does, it feeds you to get you started for the rest of the week. So I want to present Jesus rightly. I have been on a plane so many times lately and there are so many things I can get irritated by when I'm on a plane and then I remember two things. One is that I'm about to witness to this person so I better get a hold of myself because they have formed ideas about Jesus whom I'm going to present, by what I'm doing. I want to present Him rightly and rightly in our worship.

Here is what is amazing to me, we want to present God's glory through the preeminence of Christ in worship but Jesus says that He is there with us, leading us, speaking to us and one day He'll present us to His Father. Jesus will present me to the Father! How can I not come to worship Him, be gathered by Him, be led in singing as He sings over us with Him for this is the One who will present me to the Father. Hear that voice! Hear that trumpet, but until that Day I can hear His voice in the gathered worship. I believe when this lays hold of your heart the most soul stirring, heart scintillating, life shaking moment in your life will be that moment each Lord's Day. Jesus through His appointed servant says to you 'O come let us worship the Lord our God.' Let's pray.

Prayer:

Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. You may be reading this today realizing you need to commit your life to Jesus and if that's the case please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we'd love to talk and pray with you about this commitment or you may already know Jesus but

you have some issues in your heart and you would like to talk and pray with someone. You call us as well for we'd love to help. I'm so grateful you are with the family and we can handle these things together. Know this; your Savior is waiting to hear from you and if you're not yet saved He is calling you to come to Him. If you are saved He has spoken to you. He is leading you. He has gathered you and He is preparing you to present you to the Father to say, "Father the children You gave Me are washed, clothed and are Yours. I have lost not one of them." Jesus I thank You so much that You came to us, became one of us, died for us, gather us, lead us, speak to us and You will present us and I pray with thanksgiving in Your Name, Amen.

Power Point

SEVEN AFFIRMATIONS

1. Christ came for us.
2. Christ became one of us.
3. Christ came to save us.
4. Christ gathers us.
5. Christ leads us.
6. Christ speaks to us.
7. Christ will present us.

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

This and every Lord's Day by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ Himself gathers those whom He came to save as the family of God to lead us, to speak to us, and present us to the Father.