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Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #1

**THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY:**  
**God In Action In History**  
**Read Col. 1:13-20 & Phil. 2:5-11**

# WHY PEOPLE PERISH FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

- The constant problem for human beings: to find an adequate basis for life in knowledge
- We know something when we are able to represent it as it is, on an adequate basis of thought and experience.
- Knowledge involves truth: An idea or belief is true if what it is about IS as that idea or belief represents it to be

# WHY PEOPLE PERISH FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE #2

- If we act with knowledge and truth, our actions harmonize with reality. Otherwise not, or just by chance.
- Reality is totally unyielding to false belief.
- Truth frees you from bondage to a reality you disagree with.



# THE MEANING OF BABEL

- BABEL (Gen. 11:1-9) represents human efforts to succeed by human abilities ('flesh').
- They had no idea of what they were doing.
- The 'Babel' of today is the secular knowledge system—universities and professions.

# HUMAN LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO KNOWLEDGE

- Our individual powers of observation and thought are very small.
- This is a good thing because of the limitless self-will natural to man.
- So knowledge grows slowly in human history
- That allows opportunity for moral growth.

# SELF-WILL IS SET AGAINST TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

- Our desires always exceed reality.  
We will what is not.
- This is true of individuals and groups, and of institutions. (Rom. 1:18)
- The illuminating case of Simon Magnus. (Acts 8:18-24)

# BUT THE WILL (HEART OR SPIRIT) IS GOD DESIRE

- God looks on the heart.  
(1 Sam. 16:7, 2 Chron. 16:9, John 4:23-24)
- In our heart we decide what we are really about, and in particular whether what we want will govern us: God or us.
- To be joyfully abandoned to God, delighted in Him and His will, is what God wants of us.

# *DEUS ABSCONDITUS:* WHY GOD MUST HIDE

- “Truly, Thou art a God who hides Himself.”  
(Isa. 45:15)
- God hides to permit us to hide from Him  
if we want.
- The hiddenness of God from eyes and ears  
that do not wish to find Him.  
(Matt. 13:13-17)

# A WORD FROM SCREWTAPE

“Merely to override a human will (as his <God’s> felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with him, but yet themselves....” (Letter VIII)

# SO GOD IS PRESENT, BUT--

- With individuals who love Him—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, David.
- How He was present in Jesus—anyone could still deny it.
- Post-resurrection presence.
- Present in the Bible—can be disregarded or twisted.
- Present in the church —“You are hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3-4)

# WHAT THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY IS:

The Divine Conspiracy is God's plan to overcome evil with good in the grinding processes of human history.

“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14)



# THE CRUCIFIXION AS THE CENTER POINT OF IT ALL

- “And through him (Jesus) to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.” (Col. 1:20)
- “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” (John 12:32-33)
- Like the poisonous serpent (John 3:14) the poison of human self-will is what killed Jesus and what is seen on the cross.

# TRUTH IN A COMMUNITY OF CRUCIFIXION

- “The household of God, which is the church of the living God, <is> the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Tim. 3:15)
- Truth can only be endured and promoted in a community of grace where self-will does not rule.
- Jesus did not say “the truth will make you free.” (Read John 8:31-32)

# THE BURDEN OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY #1

- The battle today is not which policies shall we as a people follow, but who shall determine policy.
- That is: Who has knowledge.
- The secular mind had redefined knowledge so that it alone has it. Christians do not!

# THE BURDEN OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY #2

The greatest challenge to the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality, and with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives we lead.

# Text, Context and The Soul

## *The Divine Conspiracy #2*

**WHAT IS A HUMAN BEING:  
The Current Battle Over Human  
Nature And The Biblical View**

# THE CURRENT BATTLE: IS THERE A HUMAN NATURE?

- As the human drive to total liberty developed into the 20th Century, it became fashionable to deny that human beings have a nature.
- Because nature was used as an argument for what people could (should) and could not (should not) do. We are familiar with many dimensions of this. John Dewey.

# THE CURRENT BATTLE #2

- The swing against “nature” is seen all around us: Natural law cannot be invoked, nature cannot be invoked to support heterosexuality, man/woman ‘marriage,’ etc.
- Denying a human nature takes care of all the issues where desire wants free play at one fell swoop.
- But of course, this is a political position and has nothing to do with what is the case.

# NOTHING LACKS A NATURE

A squirrel or a brussels sprout is a definite kind of thing that has the actual parts and properties it has, and therefore stands in the relations it does stand in. The parts and properties a thing has—including human beings—is not dependent upon what anyone thinks, feels or votes.



# THE FALLEN HUMAN WILL REJECTS NATURE

- Because nature limits will and desire.
- God goes first. (Psalm 2:3, Rom. 1:21-23)
- “DEGRADING PASSIONS (vs. 26) then accept no limits in their drive to satisfaction.
- There is a certain sense in which: “If there is not God, everything is permitted.”

# THE FALLEN HUMAN WILL REJECTS NATURE #2

- Turning to the body, men use it in every way possible to gratify desire. The nature of perversion. It is driven by unlimited desire for feeling.
- And they lose their mental capacity to discern good and evil. (Eph. 4:17-19)
- And form social institutions and arrangements accordingly. (Rom. 1:28-32)

# THE ‘DISAPPEARANCE’ OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE

- When nature disappears, knowledge and truth disappear, because there is then nothing to be known.
- ‘Political Correctness’—that is, ‘correctness in someone’s view,’ is all that is left.
- This is now the rule in almost every institutional setting: courts, education, media and arts.

# OF COURSE, IT'S ALL A SHAM

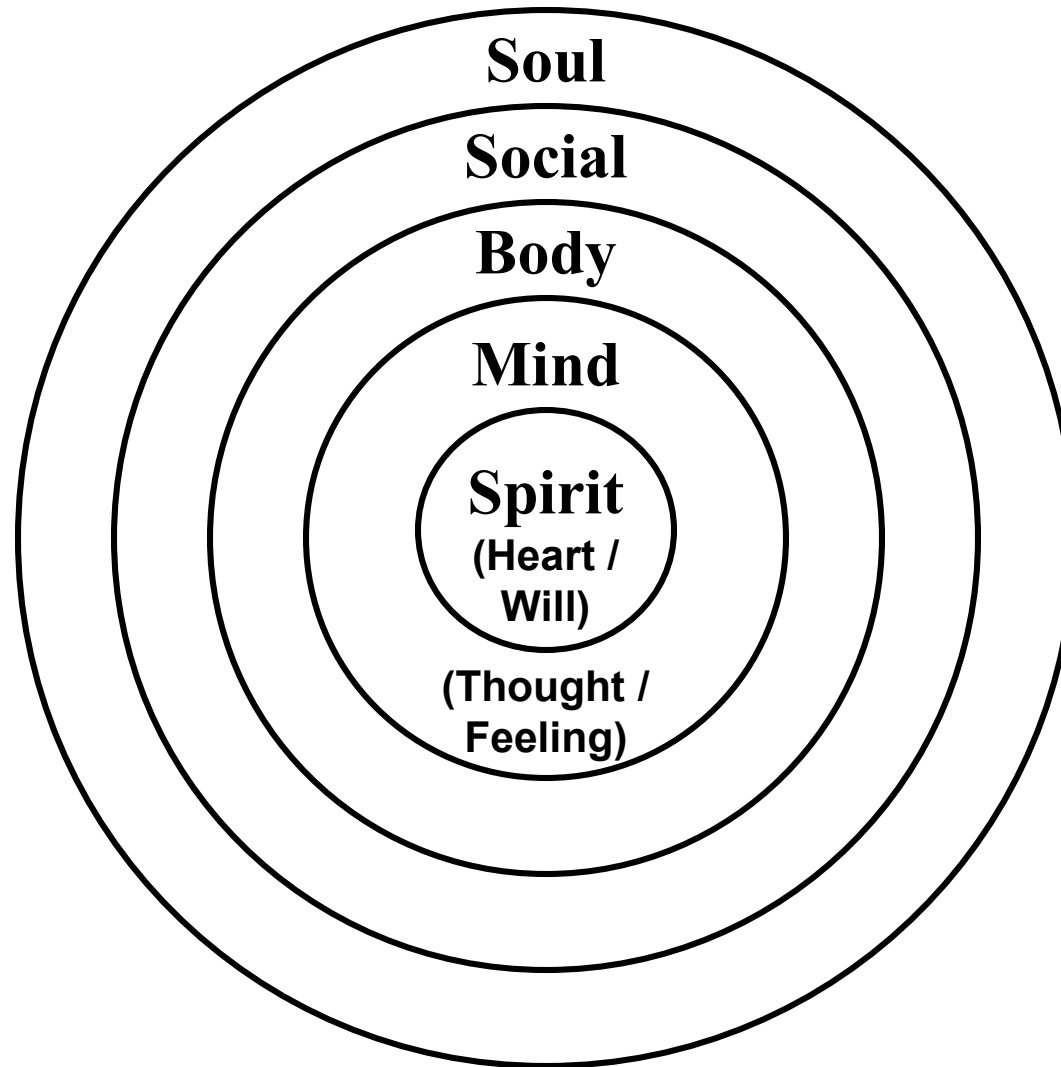
- What is good for human beings, and what is right for them to do, does not change fundamentally.
- But the human capacity to know the good and the right is distorted by the human will to fulfill desire.
- That is why a divine source of knowledge is essential to human life, as we have been told over and over.

# THE “WHOLE LAW”

- Jesus summed up the whole law as loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. (Luke 12:27)
- Paul said that to love one's neighbor fulfills the law. (Rom. 13:8-10)

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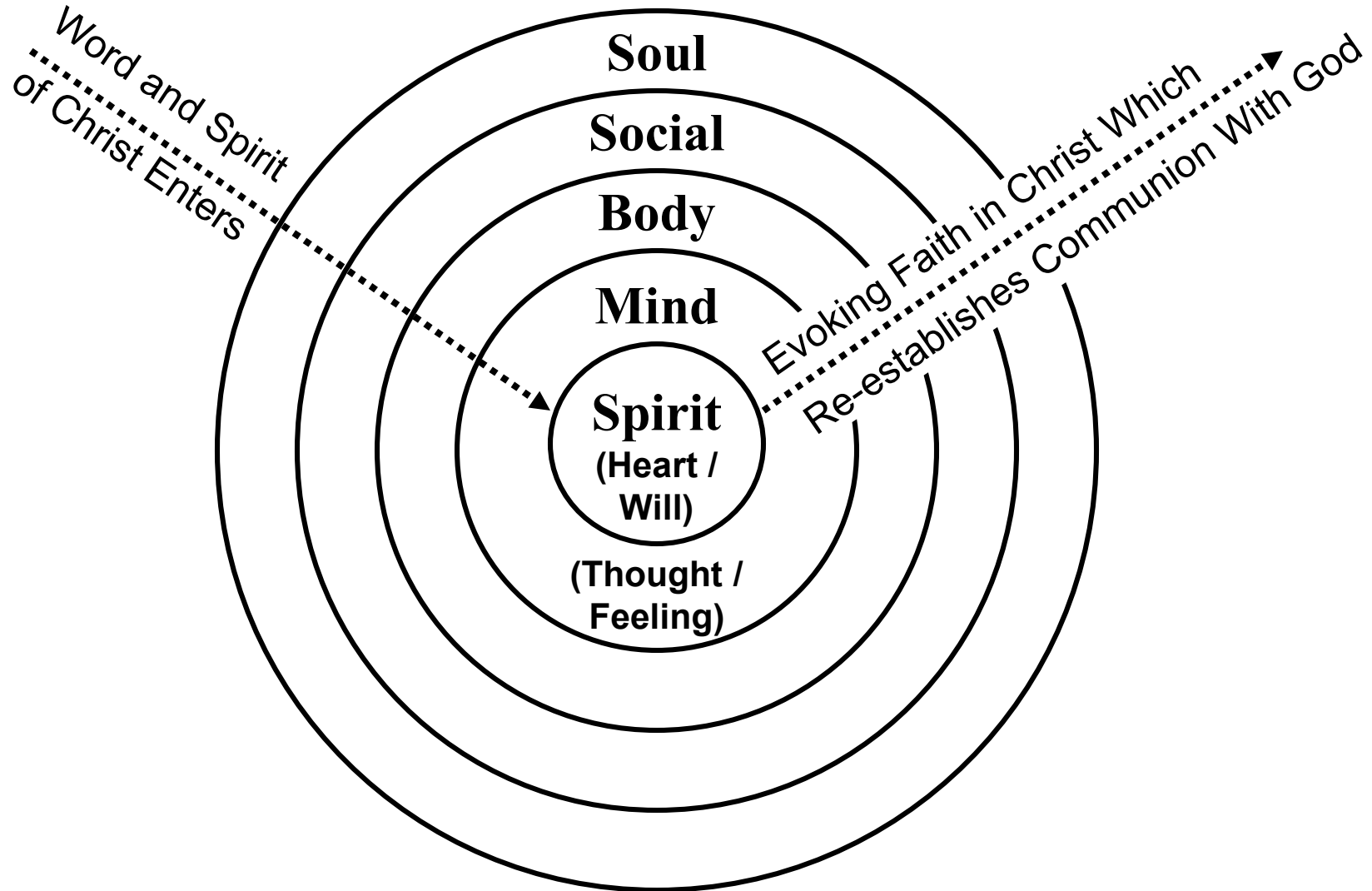
# **Infinite Environment**



**Renovation of  
the Heart, pg 38**

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# **Infinite Environment**



# THE HUMAN ROLE—TO *RULE CREATION WITH GOD*

- Gen. 1:26-28
- Psalm 8:4-9
- Isa. 63:12
- Luke 16:9-13 & 19:12-27
- Hebrews 2:5-9
- Rev. 22:5



# **Who You Are and Why You Are Here:**

**You are a never ceasing spiritual being with  
an eternal destiny in God's great universe.**

- **SPIRITUAL - In substance**
- **NEVER CEASING - In duration**
- **RULING - Creative governance  
- In destiny**

*“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent.” (John 17:3)*

*“And they shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 22:5)*

# Who You Are and Why You Are Here:

- Your life as a spiritual being is completed only by living in and from the kingdom/government of the heavens. Matthew 4:17 - *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*
- That is, by trusting Jesus Christ, Who brings us into the rule of God, and through our discipleship to Him enables us to fulfill the creation covenant of Genesis 1:26-31— **FOR ETERNITY!**

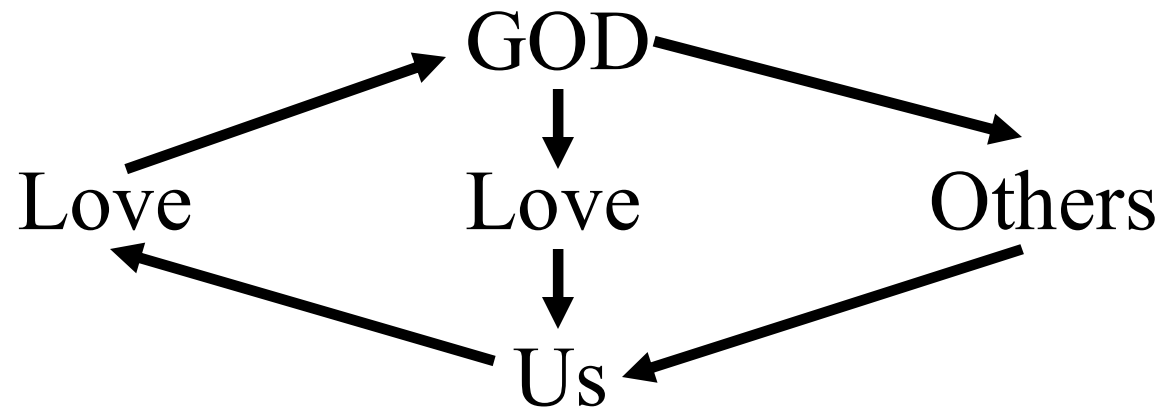
# TO LOVE IS TO WILL THE GOOD OF THE BELOVED

- The good of someone (or something) is what enables them to flourish and fulfill their function.
- It is not necessarily what they desire, and may be what they do not desire.
- To know what God wills for things enables us to know what is good for them.

# FULLY POSSESSED BY LOVE

- To love God, to love Jesus, with every dimension of our being puts us in position to be a fully functioning human being. If any part is still governed by self-will we will malfunction.
- Love of God is a personal reality that possesses our being and enables us to live a free and joyous life. Beyond legalism. We fulfill the law because we are that way.

# The Mature Life of Light, of Love, Truth and Power



- This is the structure of perfected love that CASTS OUT FEAR.
- *1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*
- Then we can stand to live in TRUTH
- And then we can be trusted with POWER

# *THE ABOLITION OF MAN*

## C. S. LEWIS

In contrast, if man is made ultimate, causal force will eventually rule and thereby “abolish” humanity, by making everything subject to the thrust of desire: the desires of some few who are able to gain the upper hand by force.

# THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY

God's aim is to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's kingdom by bringing out a world and history-wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ himself.

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy #3*

**Understanding The Kingdom Of God,  
And Its Presence On Earth**



# GOD: THE BASIC REALITY

- “I AM THAT I AM.” (Exodus 3:14)
- “The Father has life in Himself, and the Son also.” (John 5:26)
- “Gives life to all things.” (1 Tim 6:13 & 19)
- Life = self-initiating, self-sustaining, self-directing activity.

# BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

- The sweet society of God in Himself.  
(John 17:5, 22-26)
- The Trinity extends its kind of love  
throughout a redeemed community of  
humans. (John 13:35 and 17:21-24)
- “The greatest of these is love.”  
(1 Cor. 13:13) God’s basic nature.

# GOD'S ULTIMATE INTENTION

- To bring out of human history a community of every “tongue, tribe and nation,” who will play a major role in the future of the universe.
- The church a revelation to the universe (Eph. 3:10 and 2:7)
- TO “JUDGE ANGELS” (1 Cor. 6:3)
- To rule with Him for ever and ever. (Rev. 22:5)
- We don't yet know. (Col. 3:3-4, 1 John 3:2)

# THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE: PROGRESSIVE “WITH-NESS”

- INDIVIDUALS—e.g. Isaac (Gen. 26:24), Jacob (Gen. 28:15).
- THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. (Ex. 29:44-46)
- Disciples from all nations. (Matt. 28:29 and Col. 3:11-14)
- The Church. (Eph. 2:20-22)
- Heaven. (Rev. 22:3-5)

# THE PROBLEM OF THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE

- Basically a problem of what individual and corporate life leads to and what shall endure.
- On the secular view, nothing and nothing.  
The myth of Sisyphus!
- If that view is true, so be it. We must accept it.
- But the presence of Jesus and his kingdom shows it is not true.

# THE MEANING OF LIFE FOR THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST

- The love and purpose of God for us. (Rom. 8:29-37) –embedded in His eternal life.
- All of the hard things turn to our good. (Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 4:16-18)
- Every thing done with him will be preserved and rewarded. (1 Cor. 3:11-14)
- We look forward and are carried forward. Drama. Meaning.

# THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

- Looking at Matthew 3, 4, 5, 9:35-38, 24:14;  
Luke 4:43, 10:8-11, 11:20
- The parables of the kingdom.  
Matthew 13 etc.
- The change of doorway to the kingdom.  
Matt. 11:11-12, Luke 16:16
- Birth into the kingdom. John 3:5
- The kingdom in the church. Rom. 14:17

# THE SUBSTANCE AND ESSENCE OF THE KINGDOM

- The kingdom of God is the range of God's effective will—where what God wants done is done.
- The only thing outside it is rebellious human and angelic wills.
- It is not a political reality.
- It is not hidden in your heart.
- There are future dimensions to it.



Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #4

**“To Preach Among The Gentiles,  
The Unfathomable Riches  
Of Christ” (Eph. 3:8)**

# PAUL'S PERSONAL STANDING

- One who was nurtured on Israel and the glory of the unique covenant people.
- One personally tutored by the post-crucifixion Jesus.
- The first one who really “got it.”
- One who understood the hope and intention of god for all people on earth.

# WHAT ARE “THE RICHES OF CHRIST”?

**I. The physical cosmos belongs to Christ  
and is totally at his disposal.**

John 1:1-5, Heb. 1:1-4, Col. 1:15-17, 2:3

WHY THE EARLY DISCIPLES  
BELIEVED THIS: THEY HAD SEEN HIS  
POWER OVER NATURE AND DEATH.

# WHAT ARE “THE RICHES OF CHRIST”?

## **II. Christ is the master of the moral life:**

Understands moral reality and order, and

Is able to bring people to moral goodness.

The utter failure of the classical world in  
this regard.

# WHAT ARE THE “RICHESS OF CHRIST”?

III. The security and glorious future of the individual human being in Christ.

“BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING”

Luke 12:22-33, Phil. 4:6-8, Matt. 18:10

“NEVER EXPERIENCE DEATH”!

John 8:51-52, 11:25-26, 2 Tim. 1:10

# WHAT ARE “THE RICHES OF CHRIST”?

## **IV. The future of the created cosmos.**

The incredible greatness and beauty of the physical cosmos.

Not a self-contained system, as we have seen. It is sustained by the power of God, not “cold, dark matter.”

There will be a new ‘heaven’ and a new earth. And a new Jerusalem  
Rev. 21 and following.

# Things Great Teachers Must Teach

- The nature of reality
- Who is “well-off”
  - Blessedness
  - The Good Life
- Who is a “really good” person?
- How to become a “really good” person

*Jesus answers each of these in a manner far superior to anyone else— Plato, Buddha, Freud. Jesus is the smartest One ever BECAUSE HE IS FROM THERE!*

TO US THIS GRACE IS GIVEN

**To preach to a pagan world the  
unsearchable riches of Christ.**

“YOU COULD NOT HAVE WISHED TO BE  
BORN AT A BETTER TIME THAN THIS,  
WHEN EVERYTHING HAS BEEN LOST.”

(Simone Weil, *First and Last Notebooks*, p. 47)



Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #5

**The Gospel Of The Kingdom And  
Discipleship To Christ**

# NON-DISCIPLE 'CHRISTIANS'

- The now universal assumption that you can be a Christian and not a disciple of Jesus.
- The loss of any precise meaning of “disciple” in New Testament terms.
- No serious question of actually doing what Jesus said.

# Three Parts of The Great Commission



1. Make disciples, apprentices to Jesus in kingdom living.
2. Submerge them in the Trinitarian life that flows in the community of disciples of Jesus. Baptism symbolizes this.
3. Teach these disciples to do — showing them how to do — everything Jesus said.

# **What is a Disciple?**

- **One who is with Jesus, learning to be like Him.**
- **Learning from Him how to lead my life as He would lead my life if He were I.**
- **His apprentice in Kingdom Living.**
- **The easy way of living.**

# **The Gospel Heard Does Not Produce Disciples**

- Our result is due to the message we preach, or at least the one that is heard.
- It does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples.
- “Your system is perfectly designed to produce the result you are getting.”

# **Three “Gospels” Are Heard At Present**

1. Your sins will be forgiven and you will be in heaven in the afterlife if you believe that Jesus suffered your sin penalty.
2. Jesus died to liberate the oppressed and you can stand with him in that battle.
3. Do what your church says, and it will see to it that you are received by God.

# SIN MANAGEMENT

**These are all gospels of sin management, not gospels of regeneration and new life from above, *NOW*, in the present kingdom of the heavens under its living Lord Jesus Christ.**

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #6

**The Gospel Of The Kingdom And  
Discipleship To Christ**

...continued



# COMPARE--

4. Put your confidence in Jesus and live with him as his disciple now in the present kingdom of God.

(Matt. 4:17 and 6:33, Rom. 8:1-14, Col. 1:13 and 3:1-4, John 3:1-8)

On #4, salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is living on earth. Of course that involves forgiveness and heaven afterward, but much more.

# FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

- **Means I have confidence in him for everything.**
- **Want to be as close to him as possible and learn from him everything I can.**
- **Believe that all his commandments are for my benefit.**

# Things Great Teachers Must Teach, I NOW LEARN FROM JESUS

- The nature of reality
- Who is “well-off”
  - Blessedness
  - The Good Life
- Who is a “really good” person?
- How to become a “really good” person

*Jesus answers each of these in a manner far superior to anyone else— Plato, Buddha, Freud.*

*Jesus is the smartest One ever  
BECAUSE HE IS FROM THERE!*

# THE 3 THINGS TO BE LEARNED AS A DISCIPLE

- 1. How to do what Jesus explicitly commanded.**
- 2. How to live life in areas where there is not explicit command.**
- 3. How to act with the power in the kingdom.**

# WHY THE GOSPEL JESUS PREACHED IS OMITTED

- **A tragically misleading hermeneutic. Jesus and Paul, supposedly.**
- **Failure to understand what the kingdom is. Especially, a political arrangement.**
- **Corrected by a walk through the book of Acts.**

# ENLISTING IN THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY TODAY

- BY SEEKING THE KINGDOM AS JESUS SAID. Matt. 6:33.
- BY SPEAKING THE KINGDOM AND THE KING TO OTHERS.
- BY LIVING OUT “RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.” (Rom. 14:17)
- BY LIVING IN UNCOMPROMISING OBEDIENCE

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy #7*

**BEING A REALLY GOOD PERSON:  
Beyond The Righteousness Of  
The Scribes And Pharisees**

# THE GOODNESS OF THE SCRIBE AND PHARISEE

- It is the righteousness/goodness of the deed.
- Mostly, of what one did not do.
- Look at the cases of Matthew 5.
- Why the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy. (Luke 12:1)
- The awesome indictment of Matthew 23 and the lament over “Jerusalem.”(vs 37-39)

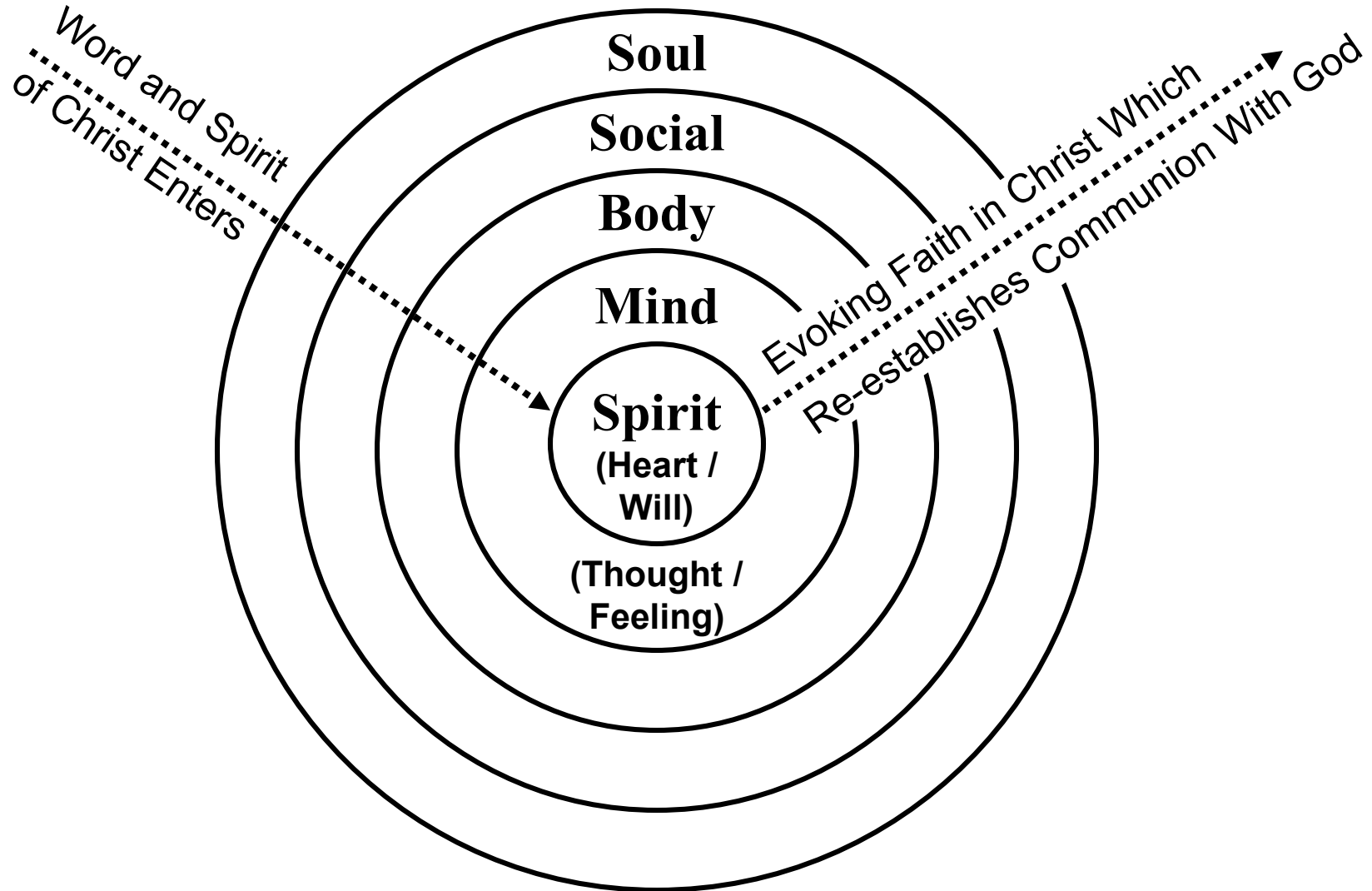


# COMPARE THIS TO KINGDOM GOODNESS

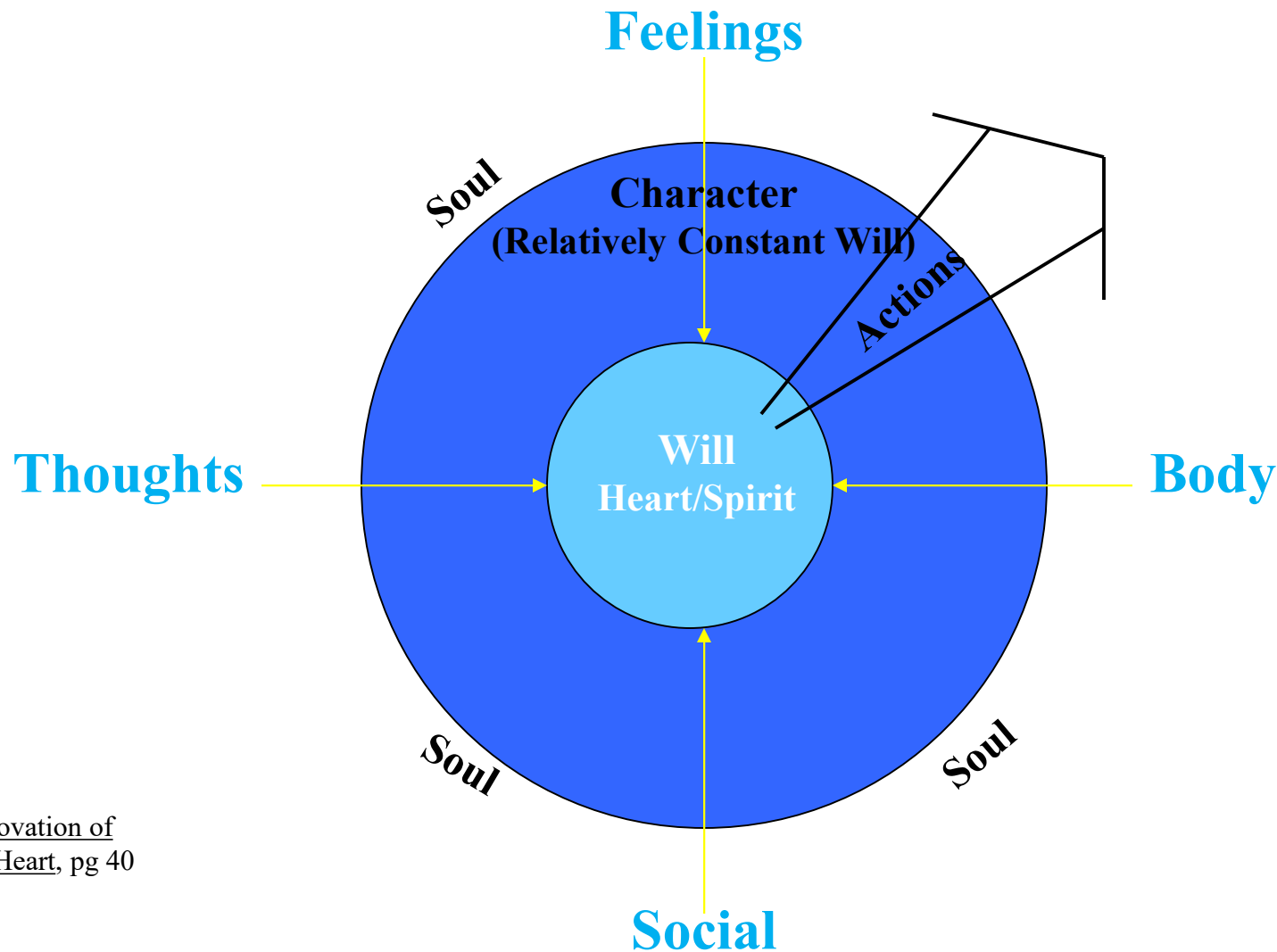
- **Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.**
- **Kingdom goodness is goodness in your every part, it is being permeated with agape love. (1 Cor. 13)**

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# **Infinite Environment**



# Where Action Comes From



Renovation of  
the Heart, pg 40

- 1. The will is the executive center of the self.**
- 2. The power to initiate or terminate a course of events.**
- 3. The inner tilt, click or 'yes' to a more or less extensive course of events involving oneself.**

**In **God's** plan the function of the will is to trust God, and thus to organize one's future around him.**

**In **Satan's** plan the function of the will is to be absorbed in itself and in getting its own way. We go astray like sheep (Isa. 53:6), "Each of us has turned to his own way."**

# **TWO FORMS THE WILL TAKES—OPPOSITE POLES ON A CONTINUUM:**

- 1. Vital/impulsive will, totally governed by desire. Typical of a child.**
- 2. Rational/moral will, normative for adults, but NOT typical of adults who never grow up.**

# **Character is the Will Settled Into Habitual Patterns of Action, Largely “Out-Sourced” to Our Body and Our Social Context.**

- **It is to a large degree what you do without thinking, but to some degree what you do after you think.**
- **Peter’s denials as illustrations.**

# HOW SUCH LOVE WOULD BE IN THE WHOLE PERSON

- **The will (spirit, heart) completely devoted to God and His purposes.**
- **The thoughts, beliefs and images turned to God and His kingdom**
- **The feelings responding to the will and thoughts/beliefs thus oriented.**



# HOW SUCH LOVE WOULD BE IN THE WHOLE PERSON

- **The body poised to do the good without thinking and expressing goodness in its “language.”**
- **Relations to others purged of attack and withdrawal**
- **The soul running smoothly in the tracks of the kingdom and God’s law.**

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #8

**BEING A REALLY GOOD PERSON:  
Beyond The Righteousness Of  
The Scribes And Pharisees**

... continued

# HOW IS THAT TRANSFORMATION GOING TO COME ABOUT?

- **Not by human effort alone.**
- **Not without human effort.**
- **Not without grace and holy spirit.**
- **Not by grace and holy spirit alone  
— not passively.**
- **“WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.”  
(John 15:5) –Yes. And you can be sure if you  
do nothing, it will be without Him.**

# WHAT IS GRACE?

- **Grace is God acting in our lives to bring about what we cannot do on our own.**
- **Grace is not opposed to effort, but to earning.**
- **Grace eliminates pride, boasting, self-reliance and self-will.**
- **Grace is not just for guilt, but for life.**  
**Eph. 3:8, 1 Cor. 15:10, 2 Cor. 9:8 & 12:9-10**

# The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Growth

***The Action of the Holy Spirit***

**John 3:5 ▪ Rom. 8:10-13 ▪ Gal. 5:22-26**

**Centered in  
the Mind of  
Christ**

**Phil 2:12-15**

**Rom. 13:14**

**Ordinary Events of  
Life: “Temptations”**

**James 1:2-4**

**Rom. 5:1-5**

**Planned Discipline to  
Put on a New Heart**

**Col. 3:12-17**

**2: Pet. 1:5-10**

# The “VIM” Principle

- Vision
- Intention
- Means



# **The Spiritual Disciplines**

## **Disciplines of ABSTINENCE**

- Solitude**
- Silence**
- Fasting**
- Frugality**
- Chastity**
- Secrecy**
- Sacrifice**

## **Disciplines of ENGAGEMENT**

- Study**
- Worship**
- Celebration**
- Service**
- Prayer**
- Fellowship**
- Confession**

# **How Does One Practice The Disciplines?**

- **Decide to live as Jesus' student**
- **Begin to obey His teachings**
- **Observe why you fail**
- **Do in reliance on the Spirit what will remove the causes of failure – These will be DISCIPLINES**



# Two Subordinations

## Improper

- **Body**
- **Soul**
- **Mind**  
(Thought/Feeling)
- **Spirit**
- **God**

## Proper

- **God**
- **Spirit**
- **Mind**  
(Thought/Feeling)
- **Soul**
- **Body**

# WHAT DOES ALL THIS HAVE TO DO WITH BEING SAVED?

- **Regeneration—New life from “above” makes forgiveness or justification appropriate.**
- **Naturally develops into sanctification,**
- **And makes glorification, already begun, inevitable**
- **Being saved is not a matter of where you are going but of who you are now: a participant in the life that Jesus is now living here.**

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #9

**How We Can Actually Teach People  
To Do The Things That Jesus Said.**

# Three Parts of The Great Commission



1. Make disciples, apprentices to Jesus in kingdom living.
2. Submerge them in the Trinitarian life that flows in the community of disciples of Jesus. Baptism symbolizes this.
3. Teach these disciples to do — showing them how to do — everything Jesus said.

# The “VIM” Principle

- Vision
- Intention
- Means



# APPLYING ‘VIM’ TO GROUPS

- We have seen how it applies to individuals.
- Local groups, through their leaders, must have the appropriate vision, intention and means implemented in the group.
- That would be achieved if the great commission were the “mission statement.”

# **DISTRACTION!!!!!! #1**

- **The typical church, denomination, parachurch does not intend, and does not have the vision of implementing, the whole Great Commission.**
- **They do not come into existence on that basis.**
- **Usually they do not know this.**

# **DISTRACTION!!!!!! #2**

- **Leith anderson's statement**
- **“Denominational” distinctives**
- **“Protest-ants”**
- **Managing to survive.**
- **Looking good**
- **Performances**



# THE TREASURE AND THE VESSEL—2 COR. 4:7

- **Stop mistaking the vessel for the treasure.**
- **The treasure: “Christ and him crucified.”  
1 Cor. 2:2**
- **Hold our ‘distinctives’ only for the Christ  
that is in them.**
- **Focus entirely on what Christ is doing  
with you.**

# **WE SIMPLY DON'T LIVE THE “VIM”**

- **With respect to being disciples.**
- **With respect to expectation of obedience—and that means...**
- **Inner transformation.**
- **So our groups are filled with and often led by people who just mean, angry, contemptuous.**
- **But really trying to be nice.**

# EXAMINE OUR “GOSPEL”

- **What is actually heard as our message?  
Sin management only?**
- **Return to the new testament and soak  
ourselves in the gospel of the kingdom**
- **We don't need to talk a lot about it, just  
do it.**

# DISCIPLESHIP NATURALLY BEGINS TO EMERGE

- **Individuals will begin to respond along the lines of Luke 14:25-35, John 8:31-34, 13:34-35, 15:8.**
- **Gradually a sense of “this is what we do” may spread over the group.**
- **Problems with renegotiating the contract.**

# THE “M” IN THE “VIM”

- The problem of finding the MEANS to carry out the INTENTION to live in the VISION.
- The first means is to be disciples ourselves, and to be constantly growing along the lines pointed out above:

# THE 3 THINGS TO BE LEARNED AS A DISCIPLE

1. How to do what Jesus explicitly commanded.
2. How to live life in areas where there is not explicit command.
3. How to act with the power in the kingdom.

THESE ARE NOT REALLY SEPARABLE!

# DISCIPLES IMMERSSED IN THE TRINITY

- **Holding our programs loosely and relying upon the presence and action of God in our midst.**
- **What you do matters little as long as you are disciples in the presence of God.**
- **A primary test and opportunity for discipleship is group friction.**

# AIM YOUR ACTIVITIES AT LEARNING TO DO ALL....

- **Openly discuss this as an aim.**
- **Work closely with those who have decided to do it.**
- **With instruction, listening, direction, feedback.**
- **For example: Learning to bless those who curse you.**



# ANNOUNCE PUBLICALLY

- **That you do teach people how to do what Jesus said.**
- **Put a sign to this effect in front of your church.**
- **State it on your bulletins and letterheads.**
- **Put it on your web-site, etc. etc.**

# REMEMBER TO LOVE THOSE NOT “WITH IT”

- **It will take time for many to understand.**
- **And when they do, they won't want it.**
- **Discipleship was not in their contract with your group.**
- **Remember the Parable of the Sower.**

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #10

**The Church and the Kingdom**

# **There Is One Thing To Do Today**

- **Simply obey Christ. Do what he said by following him as his disciples.**
- **Stop offering excuses, explanations and even theological justifications for not doing it.**
- **Bumper sticker: there's no excuse for not obeying Christ!**

# **THERE ARE REASONS--**

- **There are reasons or causes for not doing what Christ said. It isn't mystical or "from nowhere."**
- **Find out what those reasons are.**
- **Deal with them, eliminate them, don't focus on their effects.**

# **The Heart That Jesus Gives**

**Seen in the Sermon on the Mount:**

**“A Good Tree Cannot Bring Forth Bad Fruit”**

Discipleship to Jesus will bring us to being the kind of person who:

- A. Lives free of contempt and anger (Mt. 5:21-26)
- B. Is free from domination by sexual lust and disgust (Mt. 5:27-32)
- C. Is free of desire to dominate and control verbally (Mt. 5:33-37)

# The Heart That Jesus Gives

- D. Is free from grudges, ‘fairness’, and ‘paying back’ (Mt. 5:38-42)
- E. Is able to love enemies and bless those who curse, etc. (Mt. 5:43-48)
- F. Does not ‘perform’ for human credit (Mt. 6:1-18)
- G. Does not trust in physical substances (money, etc.) (Mt. 6:19-34)
- H. Does not manage others by condemnation ‘condemnation engineering’ (Mt. 7:1-12)

# The Heart That Jesus Gives

The ‘commands’ of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are invitations to be a certain type of person, a person who through faith and discipleship to Him has become inwardly transformed so that His behaviors flow naturally (supernaturally, of course) from who they now are as His mature brothers and sisters under the present rule of God.



# The Meaning of the Beatitudes

- In the light of the great inversion.
- In the light of Matt. 11:11-12 and Luke 16:16
- They are proclamation of the availability of the kingdom
- Not guarantees of blessedness or unblessableness.

# **Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit**

- Not instructions on how to be blessed.
- Not saying you cannot be blessed if you are rich in spirit.
- But breaking the illusion that those rich in spiritual things (position, education, etc) are the only ones blessable.
- Jesus' apostles and he himself were "poor in spiritual things," and were regarded with contempt.

# THE POINT

Not that the conditions cited are either good or bad, but (in Matthew), that the conditions cited were “last” in the human realm, and that that did not prevent people in those conditions from being “first” in God’s realm.  
(Apply to Luke 6)

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #11

**Eliminating Anger, Contempt And  
Cultivated Lusting From Our Lives**

# THE ORDER OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUND

- First, who is well-off, and how can you be well-off? Matt. 4:17-5:16—ALIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.
- The principle of true goodness. Matt. 5:17-20
- The order in becoming good—start by getting rid of anger, contempt and cultivation of lust. Matt. 5:21-32

# WHAT IS ANGER

- **It is will to harm.**
- **Caused by your will being crossed.**
- **An insult to your kingdom.**
- **Anger is not a sin, but only rock-solid Christian character can keep it innocent.**
- **Everything you can do with anger you can do better without it.**

# WHAT IS ANGER? #2

- **Anger is always “righteous” in the moment.**
- **It is in your body and social relations and moves before you think.**
- **It will govern your life if you do not stop being an angry person.**
- **Our “mean Christians” again.**

# STEPPING OUT OF ANGER

- **Surrender your will to God.**
- **Knowing that He is taking care of you, and your real interests are safe. (1 Peter 3:12 and 5:5-7)**
- **Now not getting what you want is not a ‘big deal.’**
- **That is the meaning of the cross in our day-to-day life.**
- **Stand for what is right, but not as a “personal matter.”**



# A WORD ON CONTEMPT

- **Contempt is a matter of regarding something as unworthy, possibly worthy of harm or loss.**
- **“Dissing” someone.**
- **The use of filthy language.**
- **Contempt walks hand in hand with anger: makes anger easy and also issues from anger.**
- **Resolve to live without contempt**
- **The answer to contempt is love.**

# LEAVING CULTIVATED LUSTING #1

- What Jesus is talking about in Mt. 5:27-32—  
not looking and lusting but looking to lust.
- Distinguish: (1) thought of sin,  
(2) inclination to sin [this is temptation],  
and (3) readiness to sin.
- Adultery in the heart is (3), manifested by  
dwelling in or inciting (2).

# LEAVING CULTIVATED LUSTING #2

- **You make the decision to go no further than (1), the thought.**
- **You decide to train yourself to avoid (1) as much as possible.**
- **By viewing the person you encounter as “an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in god’s great universe.”**

# LEAVING CULTIVATED LUSTING #3

- **By training yourself to take the initial signs which you used to use to get ready to cultivate your lusts as signs to bless, help, pray for the person in question.**
- **Since you have already surrendered self-will, getting what you want, you will not feel deprived.**
- **Agape love is the sure answer to lust.**

# DISCIPLINES ARE INDISPENSABLE

- You will need to review what we previously said about disciplines.
- Disciplines enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort.
- They work by indirection. They are not aimed at behavior modification, but the change our inner being so that we do behave differently
- Solitude and fasting, e.g., in relation to anger and lusting.

Text, Context and The Soul  
*The Divine Conspiracy* #12

**Living In The Non-Condemning  
Community Of Prayer**

# LEAVING CONDEMNATION

- What Jesus is teaching in Matt. 7:1-6—specks and dogs and hogs.
- Condemnation doesn't help.
- And our “good stuff” won't help those who can't use it.
- “God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world.” (John 3:17)
- “Discernment” does not have to be “judgment.”

# TRANSITION IN TO ASKING

- **The different model of human relations in the kingdom.**
- **The transition in Matt. 7:12, and what the “therefore” is there for.**
- **In approaching people for what we want them to do or be, we ask, and then ask God. “Leave it there.”**



# WHAT IS PRAYER?

- It is talking with God about what we are doing together, talking and listening.
- It is staying in action with the kingdom.
- Our two causal roles: laborare and orare.  
And indeed laborare est orare if done interactively with God.

# JESUS' THREE GREAT TEACHINGS ON PRAYER.

- **Matt. 6:7-11: Prayer as a cosmic force which lays the foundation of for treating others as you wish to be treated.**
- **Luke 11:2-13: The role of shamelessness in asking.**
- **Luke 18:1-8: That one ought to keep on praying and not give up.**

# **PRAYER IS FUNDAMENTALLY ASKING**

- **The “shamelessness” again. Little children know.**
- **Asking is desirable in families and friends.**  
**See Rom. 8:32, Phil. 4:6, Heb. 4:16**
- **We ask always as a part of an overall walk with God, in which our business is His business and His business is ours. Hence, “in Jesus name.”**

# IN ASKING--

- **I recognize and welcome God's presence with me and I make myself present to Him.**
- **That is asking: One of the powerful forces in the universe.**
- **Prayer very carefully makes room for our  
Significance  
Freedom**

# WHY PRAYER?

**God's intent to balance power with freedom is the explanation of this very strange arrangement at the heart of the universe. It is the why of prayer.**

**(See Paul Billheimer, Destined for the Throne.)**

# PRAYER AND GIVING

- **Prayer and giving (better, stewardship) are the baby steps into kingdom living and knowing the reality of the kingdom.**
- **They are the easy lessons in learning to act with God.**
- **The widow's two 'mites'. Luke 21:2-3**
- **Using 'mammon of unrighteousness'. Luke 16:9-13**

# THE KINGDOM PRAYER

**Dear Father always near us,  
May Your name be treasured and  
loved, May Your rule be completed  
in us---May Your will be done here  
on earth in just the way it is done in  
heaven. Give us today the things we  
need for today,**

# THE KINGDOM PRAYER

## (CONTINUED)

**And forgive our sins and impositions on You as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us. Please don't put us through trials, but deliver us from anything bad. Because You are the One in charge, and You have all the power, and the glory too is all Yours—forever—which is just the way we want it!**



# REMEMBER

- **Carry everything to God in prayer.**
- **Pray without ceasing: keep it flowing. Train your mind and body to do this.**
- **Frank Laubach's "Game of Minutes" and *Prayer: the Greatest Force on Earth*.**
- **No limit. Eph. 3:20-21, Mark 11:22-26, etc.**