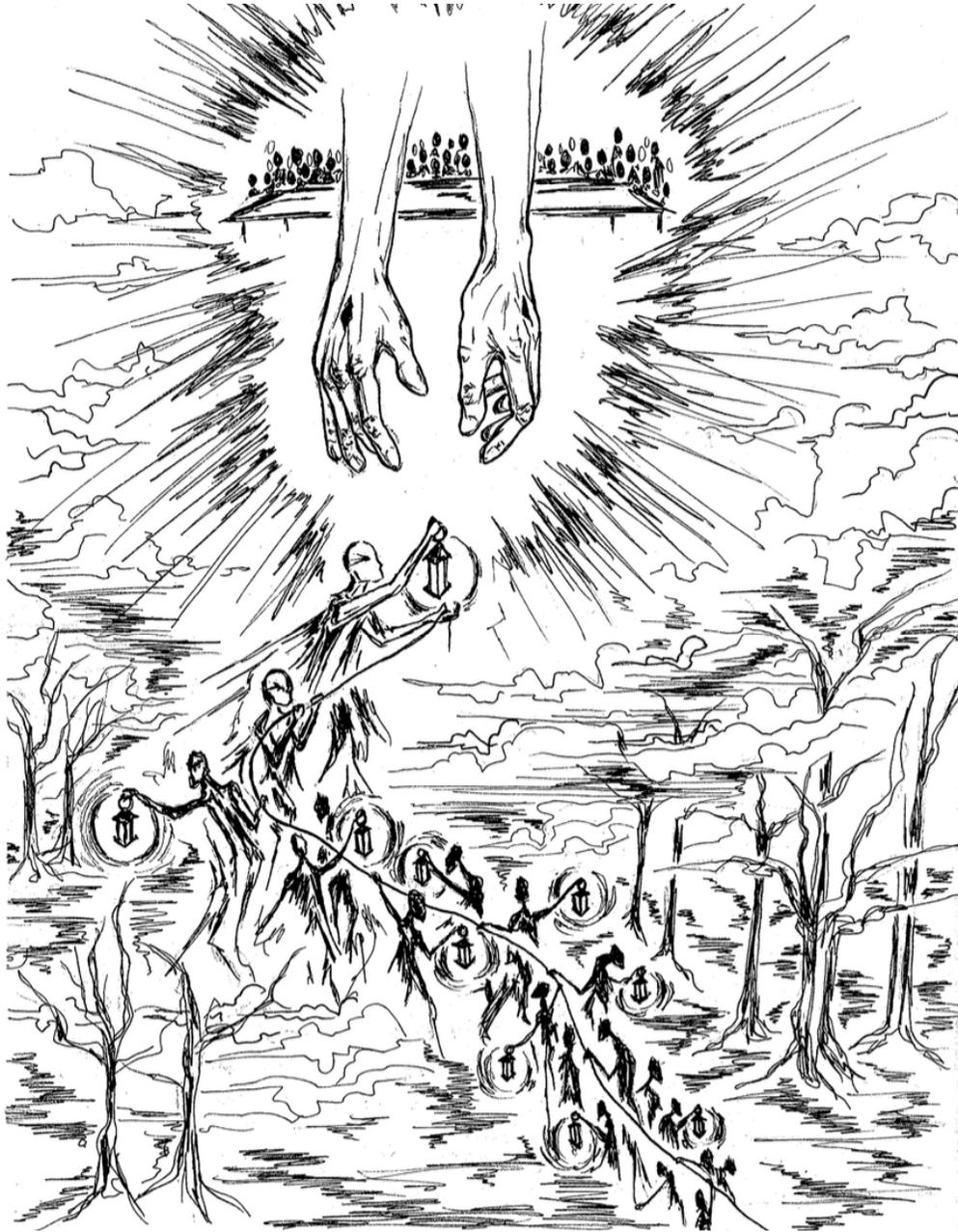


RESCUED, LED, GIVEN-
MERCY AS AN ORDINARY LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS



A CATECHISM FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE

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PART I

WILDERNESS—WHAT LIFE IS LIKE

I. THE IMPENETRABLE WILDERNESS OF SUFFERING AND TROUBLE

What is ordinary life like?

Ordinary life feels like an impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble.

Why does life feel like an impenetrable wilderness?

There doesn't seem to be a way through all

life's conflicts and temptations, all its discords and desires

life's uncertainties and complications, all its disruptions and setbacks

life's afflictions and mistreatment, all its misery and injustice

People in the wilderness are troubled.

They don't know how they're going to make it.

II. THE SHRIEKING FOG OF LIES AND THE IMPENETRABLE WILDERNESS OF SUFFERING AND TROUBLE

Is that the only thing that makes life hard?

Not the only thing.

The impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble that we are trying to make our way through is covered with a thick, shrieking fog of lies that makes

it hard to see our way through.

What is in the shrieking fog of lies?

The shrieking fog of lies is made up of

the siren of our anxiety
the funk of our depression
the grip and pull of our traumatized bodies
the static of the world's values
and an accuser called the devil

Another way of saying it, the shrieking fog is full of

The mind's intimidation
The body's expectation
The world's provocations
The devil's accusations

What's the difference between all these things?

The only enemy in the fog is the devil.

We are often at odds with the ways of the world and what it thinks is important.

But we are not the enemy of the world, we desire its salvation and its good.

We are often at odds with the ways of our minds and bodies, what they leap at and pull us toward.

But we are not the enemy of our broken minds and traumatized bodies, we desire their salvation and their good. We desire the wholeness and healing of our minds and our bodies.

We are the friend of our bodies, our minds, and the world. Not because we agree with them, but because we desire their salvation and their good.

But they are friends we can't always trust.

They can turn on us and become bullies.

If they aren't all the same, what do they all have in common? What are they all lying about?

They can all lie to us about what life's about and what we need to be okay. They can point our legitimate hunger for beauty, goodness, and truth in the wrong direction.

What kind of lies do they tell?

I can only say this generally

The siren of anxiety can say that things are

ominous
foreboding
fated
inevitable
missing,
wrong,
unbearable,
overwhelming
unmanageable

all messed up
perilous,
teetering
or alarming,

Even when they're not

The funk of depression can say that things are

dreary
drab
gloomy
stagnant
stuck
stalled
futile
pointless
worthless
stupid

even when they're not

The grip and push of our traumatized bodies

grips us so that we are made to feel

a tension and unease that becomes
apprehension and dread until it feels like
doom and annihilation.

Even when there's no reason to feel those things.

And our bodies push us so that we feel

A hurry and rush that turns into
stress and urgency until we are completely
panicked and frantic.

Even when there's not reason to feel those things

The static of the world's values says certain things in the world are

the most important
the highest value and
the overriding concern

Even when they are not.

And the devil will always be accusing us that we are

condemned
hopeless
irredeemable
unlovable
ruined
cursed
discredited
disqualified
crossed out
danished
expelled

And that a verdict and judgment has already been pronounced against us that can't be reversed.

So the devil accuses us and the world can deceive and pressure us. But are you sure my mind and body are not an enemy?

Our minds and bodies are our friends.
But there is a brokenness and fragility to them.

Our fragile minds and bodies— our friends—can gang up on us and start to bully us.

They can all do what bullies do. They can

apply pressure
tell us what to do
and make us feel like we can't so no

It doesn't make them enemies. But it means they cannot always be trusted. And they can tell us things that are not true. That they need to be stewarded.

They are not the enemy.

But lies are an enemy, simply because they are not true. And if they are not true, they are not beautiful or good.

We are not the enemy of our minds and bodies or the world, we are, ultimately, the friend of our broken mind, our traumatized bodies, and a misguided world, but it is important that we resist the dark pull of lies.

It is important that we resist the dark pull of the mind's intimidation, the

body's anticipation, the world's provocation, and the devil's accusation.

To live is to move through an impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble while surrounded by a thick, shrieking fog of lies that exerts a constant dark pull.

People in the wilderness and fog of everyday life are bullied and troubled.

III. A WOUNDED SOUL IN THE SHRIEKING FOG OF LIES AND THE IMPENETRABLE WILDERNESS OF SUFFERING AND TROUBLE

Is that all?

Not all.

It is important that we talk about who we are as we move through the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble and the shrieking fog of lies.

Who are we?

We are wounded souls, moving through a shrieking fog of lies and the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble.

What is a soul?

A soul is a way of talking about ourselves.

A way of talking about who we are.

A way of talking about what we need to be okay.

What do our souls need to be okay?

Our souls need to be seen, safe, and satisfied to be okay

Our souls need ordinary lives of honor, strength, and purpose to be okay.

Our souls need ordinary lives of regard, assurance, and fulfillment to be okay.

How are our souls going to get that kind of life in the shrieking fog of lies and the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble?

A lot of times they won't.

That's why our souls are wounded. That's why we are wounded souls.

The impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble and the shrieking fog of lies do not make it easy to have an ordinary lives of

honor
strength
purpose

So how are they wounded?

Our souls are wounded because in the impenetrable wilderness and shrieking fog we have experienced three great, unbearable losses

shame—the loss of dignity, honor and regard

fear—the loss of security, assurance and strength
despair—the loss of meaning, fulfillment and purpose

Shame, fear, and despair are the three wounds of the soul, the soul's three great unbearable losses. The three losses that it doesn't seem possible to bear.

How come we don't hear people say they've been wounded with shame, fear, and despair?

We say it other ways.

Instead of shame and the loss of honor and regard, we say that we've been treated with

A rudeness that turns into
disrespect until becomes
contempt

Or that we've gone
unnoticed in ways that make us feel
ignored until we feel completely
neglected.

Or that we've been
diminished in ways that make us
embarrassed until we feel we begin to feel completely
humiliated.

Or that we've been
misled to the point that we feel
manipulated until we begin to feel completely

betrayed

Or that we're being
Used to the point that we feel
degraded until we begin to feel completely
devoured

Or that we feel we've been
treated roughly until we begin to feel
bullied until we feel completely
crushed.

These are all various kinds of shame we suffer.

Various ways in which we can feel honor and regard has been taken.

The loss of honor and regard hurts. It is painful. It hurts.
People who have lost honor and regard are hurting.

What about fear and the loss of assurance and security and strength?

We say it other ways.
Instead of fear, we say that we feel

unprepared in ways that can begin to make us feel
intimidated
until we feel trapped.

Or that things are
vulnerable in ways that make us feel
exposed until we feel we will be
swallowed

Or that things

Are delicate in ways that begin to feel
unstable until we feel close to
collapse.

Or that we feel cautious until
we are nervous to the point where we feel
terrified.

The loss of assurance and strength is scary. It's painful. People who've lost
security and assurance are scared.

And what about despair and the loss of meaning and purpose?

Instead of despair, we often say that we feel

An agitation that makes us
aggravated until we are completely
outraged and dismayed.

Or that we are restless until we become
dissatisfied the point that we become
desperate.

Or that we feel a sense loss that becomes
sorrow to the point where we are
devastated.

Or that we feel

disappointed until we become
discouraged and get to the point where we feel completely
defeated

Or that we feel
disorganized in a way that begins to make us feel
disorientated until we feel we feel a sense of complete
disintegration

Despair is probably the hardest to spot.

There are then, the five d's of despair.
dismay, desperation, defeat, disintegration, devastation

Despair is something that feels
uncomfortable until it feels
miserable to the point that we are in
anguish.

These are all different kinds and ways of talking about despair, a loss of
fulfillment, purpose, and satisfaction.

Despair is painful.

The loss of meaning and purpose and fulfillment is upsetting. People who
have lost meaning and purpose are upset.

What does all this loss make us?

Wounded people in the wilderness and fog of everyday life are hurt, scared,
upset, bullied, and troubled.

To be wounded in these ways—to be hurt, scared, and upset like this— is to feel like a stranger in your own life.

Shame, fear, and despair are radically alienating. They are the wounds of exile. They make us feel far from home. They make us feel like we are not a part of life.

To be hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled is to have had important things taken.

To have these things taken is to lose our bearings, to lose our home. And this makes us feel like strangers in our own life.

Are we the enemies of our wounded soul?

No, even though the wounded soul can be scary and frightening and disorienting to us, we are the friend of our wounded soul. We desire its mending and it's good.

We desire the wounded soul's honor, safety, and satisfaction.

IV. A WOUNDED SOUL WITH A HARDENED HEART IN THE SHRIEKING FOG OF LIES AND THE IMPENETRABLE WILDERNESS OF SUFFERING AND TROUBLE

So we're all hurt, scared, upset, bullied and troubled? And this makes us strangers in our life, right? That's it right? What can make it harder?

There is a last thing.

We are also selfish.

To live is to be hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled, and selfish.

To live is to be wounded and selfish.

We live as gods and strangers in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness of everyday life.

Hurt because we've lost dignity, honor and regard

Scared because we've lost security, assurance and strength

Upset because we've lost meaning, fulfillment and purpose

Bullied because of the dark pull of lies—the devil's accusations, the world's provocations, the mind's intimidations, the body's expectations

Troubled because of all of life's conflicts and temptations, uncertainties and complications, affliction and mistreatments.

And selfish because our only shepherd through all of it is

the hardness of our own hearts. The hardness of the heart is the only way we know how to be okay when we're hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled.

We are selfish because of the hardness of our hearts.

If it's our wounded souls that make us strangers.

It's the hardness of the heart that makes us gods.

What does that even mean? What is the hardness of the heart?

Hardness of the heart is our selfish pride that says we can

clothe our own shame,
make ourselves safe,
and satisfy ourselves

that we can

take back dignity, honor and regard, and make the world look at us
take back security, assurance and strength, and make the world safe
take back meaning, purpose and fulfillment, and make the world what we
want

fight off all injustice and bullies
make a life without suffering and trouble

The hardness of heart is simply the thing that says we can take back what's
been lost. And that we can take it back ourselves.
That we can bring ourselves home again.

So that we don't have to feel

shame
fear
despair

So that we don't have to be

hurt
scared
upset

So that we don't have to have

Suffering and trouble and bullies

The hardness of the heart is about what we'll do to be okay.

Hardness of heart is about counting on the wrong thing to be okay.

Our selfish pride is about counting on the wrong thing when we're hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled

It's about counting on ourselves to be okay.

What does the hardness of the heart look like? This thing that makes us like gods?

It looks like

Vengeance, defense and retaliation—to clothe our shame and take back honor and regard

Manipulation, coercion and control—to cast out fear and to take back assurance and strength

Defiance, refusal and revolt—to defeat despair and take back meaning and purpose and fulfillment

The hardness of heart is about what we'll do to not have to be hurt, scared, and upset.

And it looks like

Bitterness, cruelty, grievance, resentment, contempt, and grudges—when we can't.

What effect does the wounded soul have on the hardened heart, and what effect

does the hardened heart have on the wounded soul?

They often lie so close together, and are so tangled and jumbled up together, that we can't tell the difference.

But we would say

The wounded soul awakens the hardness of the heart.
And the hardness of the heart deepens the wounds of the soul.

That is, when we are hurt, scared, upset because we are bullied and troubled, we are going to start counting on the wrong thing to be okay.

We going to start developing bad habits—false consolations, wrong ways to be okay.

We are going to start counting on ourselves to be okay. We are going to develop the bad habit of depending on ourselves.

And counting on ourselves will only make us more hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled.

Feeling like a stranger—feeling exiled by shame, fear, despair, feeling exiled by the soul's three great unbearable losses—will make us want to be gods. Gods who can clothe their own shame, cast out all their fear, end their own despair. Gods who can make a life without suffering, bullies, or trouble. God's who want to make their own beauty, truth, and goodness.

The problem is becoming a god only deepens shame, fear, and despair, only makes us more of a stranger to ourselves and others.

And shame, fear, and despair, only deepens the hardness of heart.

So in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness, there are two enemies, pride and lies?

Yes, we are the friends of our wounded souls, broken minds, traumatized bodies, and a misguided world. We desire their salvation and their good.

We are only the enemy of pride and lies.

How come it is so hard to distinguish all these things from one another? How will I know if I'm hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled or just being selfish?

The wounded soul, the hardened heart, the thick shrieking fog, and the impenetrable wilderness don't feel like different things.

They're all tangled together, like a giant messy ball of yarn. They're all jumbled together. It takes time to sort them out. We feel like that tangled mess.

It takes Mercy to sort it all out. It takes Mercy to sort us all out. Mercy to sort out what must be cleansed from what must be mended from what must be driven out. Mercy to cleanse, mend, and drive out.

It takes Mercy
To heal our minds, bodies, and souls,
And drive out pride and lies.

What hope is there for the wounded soul and the hardened heart in the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble and the shrieking fog of lies?

Nothing but Mercy.

Nothing but Mercy to sort us out and make a way through.

Nothing but Mercy to rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other.

Nothing but Mercy to provide beauty, goodness, and truth.

Do we have Mercy?

Yes, very much.

How do we know we Mercy?

Because we are Christians.

PART II

MERCY – WHAT LIFE'S ABOUT

I. MERCY IS WHAT LIFE'S ABOUT

Even though we are wounded souls with hardened hearts, making our way through the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble and the shrieking fog of lies,

Even though we are wounded, selfish people

We are Christians.

And we can still be Christians.

What is a Christian?

A Christian is someone who has received Mercy.

What is Mercy?

Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. A Goodness, Beauty, and Truth that is also.

Cleansing of our selfish pride

Provision for the wounded soul

Exorcism of the devil and all lies

Rest from suffering, trouble, and death.

Mercy is the friend of wounded souls, broken minds, traumatized bodies, and a misguided world.

And the enemy of pride and lies.

Because Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Because It is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves, and each other.

And because Mercy is Goodness, Beauty and Truth, and because Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest and because Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves, and others.

Mercy is What Life's About. And Mercy is what we need to be okay.

What does it mean that wounded, selfish people in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness can receive Mercy?

Receiving Mercy means that even though we are wounded souls with hardened hearts in the impenetrable wilderness and shrieking fog, we can still be

changed,
shepherded,
and established.

What does that mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and

the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by Mercy
shepherded by Mercy
established by Mercy

II. MERCY IS A REVELATION FROM GOD

If Mercy is What Life's About, then what is life about?

If we have received Mercy, we have
Beauty, Goodness, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Rest, and Exorcism.
And we can be rescued, led, and given.

If we have received Mercy, then we have What Life's About. And we have what we need to be okay.

But What Life's About and what we need to be okay is also a Revelation from God, who alone can reveal What Life's About and what we we need to be okay.

Mercy is the Revelation of
His steadfast love
His involvement and
His making things right

If Mercy is What Life's About, then life is about this Revelation from God,

life is about

His steadfast love

His involvement

His making things right

His Mercy is a steadfast love that gets involved in the mess of life and makes things right.

Is His Steadfast Love different than His Involvement and Making Things Right?

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

His Involvement is the vindication is of His Steadfast Love and our preparation for His Making Things Right, with His Making Things Right as the fulfillment of His Steadfast Love.

What does that mean about what the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,

If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,

If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,

then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by His steadfast love

shepherded by His involvement

established by His making things right

III. MERCY IS THE REALITY OF GOD

If we have received Mercy, we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God,
What Life's About, and
What we need to be okay

But this Revelation from God is also the Reality of God,
the Reality of

Who God Is
Where God's Going
What God's Doing

If Mercy if What Life's About, then life is about the Reality of God, life is
about

Who God Is—being drawn into the Reality of His steadfast love
Where God's Going—being drawn into the Reality of His involvement.
What God's Doing—being drawn into the Reality of His making things right.

Is Who He Is different than Where He's Going and What He's Doing?

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

Where He's Going is the vindication of Who He Is and our preparation for

What He's Doing, with What He's Doing as the fulfillment of Who He Is.

What does it mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by Who God Is
shepherded Where God's Going
established by What's God's Doing

IV. MERCY IS THE STORY OF GOD

What else is Mercy?

If we have received Mercy, we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
The Reality of God
A Revelation from God,
What Life's About, and
What we need to be okay

But this Revelation from God and Reality of God is also the Story of God.

Mercy is a Story God Himself speaks to us.

Mercy is a Revelation and Reality because it is a Story that God wants us to know.

A Story about what?

About a Revelation and a Reality that speaks an
Overturning Word that leads a hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled, selfish
people in
Solemn Procession toward a
Joyful End.

If Mercy is What Life's About, then life is about

An Overturning Word—by which we know Who God Is and are drawn into
the Reality of His steadfast love

A Solemn Procession— by which follow Where God's Going and are drawn
into the Reality of His involvement.

A Joyful End—by which we become a part of What's God's Doing and are
drawn into the Reality of His making things right.

*Is the Overturning Word different than the Solemn Procession and the Joyful
End?*

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

The Solemn Procession is the vindication of the Overturning Word and our
preparation for the Joyful End. With the Joyful End as the fulfillment of the
Overturning Word.

What does that mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by the Overturning Word
shepherded in the Solemn Procession,
established by the Joyful End

V. MERCY IS THE PERSON OF CHRIST

What else is Mercy?

If we have received Mercy, we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
The Story of God
The Reality of God
A Revelation from God
What Life's About and
What we need to be okay

But this Revelation from God, the Reality of God, the Story of God, is also a

Person Who Is God.

We have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God
The Reality of God, and
The Story of God
In the Person of Christ

What kind of Person is Christ?

A Person
who died
who's risen
who'll come again

Is that it?

No, because he died, rose, and will come again, this Person is a lot of things.
This Person is Beauty, Goodness, and Truth,
This Person is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest

He is

The Overturning Word, the Revelation of Who God Is, and the Reality of
His Steadfast Love

He is

The Solemn Procession, the Revelation of Where God's Going, and the
Reality of His involvement

He is

The Joyful End, the Revelation of What God's Doing, and the Reality of His making things right.

We refer to those things, all at once, when we say this Person is Jesus,

The Ascended Christ,

The Christ who died,
The Christ who's risen,
The Christ who'll come Again

What does it mean that Jesus is the Ascended Christ?

Because He died for us, He can be trusted.
Because He rose again, He is alive.
Because He's coming again, He is in charge.

Saying Jesus is the Ascended Christ means that even though He is not physically with us, He is still physically somewhere.

And He is still alive, in charge, and can be trusted.

Christ's Ascension isn't a point of doctrine—it is what is most real, more real than our circumstances, more real than our moods, and our petty fights with ourselves. And it is a tenderness and severity.

The tenderness is that the Lamb who was slain is in charge of reality.

The severity is we are not.

The Ascended Christ is Mercy. The Ascended Christ is

Beauty,
Goodness
Truth

Cleansing
Provision
Exorcism
Rest

The Ascended Christ is the Mercy that can

Rescue us
Lead us,
And give us back to God, ourselves, and others.

The Ascended Christ—the Christ who died, the Christ who's risen, the Christ who'll come again—is the careful shepherd of wounded, selfish people in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness of everyday life.

The Crucified Christ
changes a wounded selfish people,
rescuing us from our selfish pride
clothing all our shame
withstanding all our bullies and lies.

The Crucified Christ is how we are changed.
The Crucified Christ is our rescue, clothing, and withstanding.

The Crucified Christ is the way out of pride, shame, and lies.

The Crucified and Risen Christ
shepherds a wounded selfish people
leading us from our selfish pride
walking through all our fears
enduring all our suffering and trouble

The Crucified and Risen Christ is how we are shepherded.
The Crucified and Risen Christ is our leading, our walk, and our enduring.
The Crucified and Risen Christ is the way through fear, suffering, trouble,
distraction, and temptation.

The Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ
establishes a wounded, selfish people,
ending our selfish pride and giving us to one another
ending our despair and giving us meaning
ending death and the devil and giving us rest

The Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ is how we are established.
The Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ is the right end.
The Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ is the goodness, meaning,
fulfillment, and purpose we are headed toward.

So what is life about again?

If Mercy is What Life's About, then life is about a Person who died, rose, and
will come again.

The Ascended Christ is What Life's About and What we we need to be okay.

A Person,

who died—so we could be claimed by His Overturning Word, know Who God Is and be drawn to the Reality of His steadfast love

who rose—so we could be carried in His Solemn Procession, following Where God's Going and being drawn to the Reality of His involvement.

who'll come again—so we can be completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing and being drawn to the Reality of His making things right.

Is the Christ who died different than the Christ who's risen and the Christ who'll come again?

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

The Christ who's risen is the vindication of the Christ who died and our preparation of the Christ who'll come again, the Christ who'll come again as the fulfillment as the Christ who died.

What does this mean about what the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,

If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,

If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,

then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay, and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by the Ascended Christ
shepherded by the Ascended Christ.
established by the Ascended Christ

changed by the Crucified Christ.
shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ
established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

VI. MERCY IS THE GIFTS THIS PERSON GIVES

What else is Mercy?

If we have received Mercy, we have
A Person who Is God,
The Story of God,
The Reality of God,
A Revelation from God,
What Life's About,
And What we need to be okay
Or, said differently,

Mercy is What Life's About, and

If we have received Mercy, we have
Beauty, Goodness, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God
The Reality of God, and
The Story of God,

In the Person of Christ

But Mercy is also the Gifts this Person gives to wounded, selfish people.

Mercy is also the Gifts of God given to wounded, selfish people by the Person of Christ.

What are His Gifts to us? What are the Gifts of God?

The Gifts of the Ascended Christ,
The Gifts of this Person Who Is God,
The Gifts of Mercy

are

The gift of Forgiveness
The gift of Company
The gift of Joy

They are the Gifts he gives to wounded souls with hardened hearts, in the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble and the shrieking fog of lies

If Mercy is What Life's About, then life is about His Gifts, life is about

The gift of His Forgiveness, by which we are changed by the Crucified Christ and claimed by His Overturning Word, knowing Who God Is and being drawn to the Reality of His steadfast love.

The gift of His Company, by which we are shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ and carried in His Solemn Procession, following Where God's Going and being drawn to the Reality of His involvement.

The gift of His Joy by which we are established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing and being drawn to the Reality of His making things right.

The gift of His Forgiveness, His Company, and His Joy to wounded souls with hardened hearts.

The gift His Forgiveness, His Company, and His Joy, given to gods and strangers.

Is His Forgiveness different than His Company and His Joy?

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

His Company is the vindication of His Forgiveness and our preparation for His Joy, with His Joy as the fulfillment of His Forgiveness.

What does this mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,

If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,

If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,

then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by the gift of His Forgiveness,
shepherded by the gift of His Company,

established by the gift of His Joy

VI. MERCY IS THE EVENTS OF CHRIST

What else is Mercy?

Mercy is What Life's About.

If we have received Mercy,
we have

A Revelation from God,
The Reality of God
The Story of God,
In the Person of Christ
Who Gives us His Gifts

When we say this Person gives us the Gifts of God,

His Forgiveness,
His Company,
His Joy

This is only because these gifts are part of another gift this Person gives,
the gift of Himself to us.

The gift of Himself to wounded souls with hardened hearts in the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and the shrieking fog of lies.

The gift of Himself to wounded, selfish people.

The gift of Himself to gods and strangers.

He gives us Himself by giving us a share in the Events of His Life.

We have the Gifts of God

His Forgiveness

His Company

His Joy

because we share in the Events of Christ.

Wait, I'm lost, what does this mean?

It means the Christ

who died,

who rose,

who will come again

Has given us

His Dying,

His Rising,

His Coming Again

If Mercy is What Life's About, then life is about sharing in the Events of Christ,

Mercy is sharing in His Dying, His Rising, and His Coming Again.

His Dying, Rising, and Coming is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

His Dying, Rising, and Coming is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest.

His Dying, Rising, and Coming can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves, and others.

By sharing in His Dying, we receive the gift of His Forgiveness and are changed by the Crucified Christ, being claimed by His Overturning Word, knowing Who God Is, and being drawn to the Reality of His steadfast love

By sharing in His Rising, we are kept safe by the gift of His Company and shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ, carried in His Solemn Procession, following Where God's Going, and being drawn to the Reality of His involvement.

By sharing in His Coming, we are fulfilled by the gift of His Joy and established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing, and being drawn to the Reality of His making things right.

Is His Dying different than His Rising and His Coming?

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

His Rising is the vindication of His Dying and our preparation for His Coming, with His Coming as the fulfillment of His Dying.

What does this mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,

If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each
other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and What we need to be okay and
the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by His Dying
shepherded by His Rising and
established by His Coming Again

PART III

THE MEANS OF GRACE—WHAT WE NEED TO BE OKAY

I. MERCY THROUGH THE MEANS OF GRACE

Is that all?

Not quite.

Mercy is What Life Is About and What we need to be okay,

And if we have received Mercy, we have

Goodness, Truth, and Beauty,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God
The Reality of God
The Story of God
In the Person of Christ
Who gives us His Gifts
By sharing the Events of His Life

If Mercy is What Life's About then life is about His Dying, His Rising, and His Coming.

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each

other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and
the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy, to be

changed by His Dying,
shepherded by His Rising,
established by His Coming

And if that's true, then gods and strangers are going to need a way to be
changed, shepherded, and established by His Dying, His Rising, and His
Coming in the impenetrable wilderness and shrieking fog of everyday life.

A way to be changed, shepherded, and established when we are hurt, scared,
upset, bullied, troubled, and selfish.

Do we have this?

We do, we do have this.

A Mercy not just
for the wilderness,

but a Mercy
in this wilderness.

.

What is our Mercy in this wilderness?

Our Mercy in the wilderness is His Means of Grace.

Mercy is What Life's About and What we need to be okay.

And if we received Mercy then we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God
the Reality of God
the Story of God
in the Person of Christ
who gives us His Gifts
by sharing the Events of His Life
through His Means of Grace

The Means of Grace is our Mercy in the wilderness.
It is how we receive this Mercy in the wilderness.

If Mercy is What Life's About and what we need to be okay.
Then life is about counting on the Means of Grace.

It is how wounded, selfish people are changed by His Dying, shepherded by
His Rising, and established by His Coming Again.

The Means of Grace is how gods and strangers become His servants and
guests in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness of everyday life.

*What are the Means of Grace we'll need in our everyday life? What is the
Means of Grace that will change wounded, selfish people and make things okay?*

The Means of Grace is

The proclamation of His Gospel,
The guidance of His Spirit
The building of His Fellowship

If Mercy is What Life's About and what we need to be okay, then life is about counting on His Means of Grace.

the proclamation of His Gospel—by which we share in His Dying, receiving the gift of His Forgiveness, and are changed by the Crucified Christ, being claimed by His Overturning Word, knowing Who God Is and being drawn into the reality of His steadfast love.

the guidance of His Spirit—by which we share in His Rising, receiving the gift of His Company, and are shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ, being carried in His Solemn Procession, following Where God's Going and being drawn into the Reality of His involvement.

the building of His Fellowship—by which we share in His Coming, receiving the gift of His Joy, and are established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing and being drawn into the Reality of His making things right.

But what if I don't know what the proclamation of His Gospel means, or what the guidance of His Spirit means, or what the building of His Fellowship means?

The Gospel is simply the News of His Dying. The News of Christ and Him Crucified.

It is News of the Christ who died.

The News of His Forgiveness.

The News of the Overturning Word.

The News of Who God Is.

The News of His steadfast love.

The proclamation of His Gospel is simply the announcement of this News.

By the announcement of His News, we can share in His Dying, receiving the gift of His Forgiveness, being changed by the Crucified Christ, claimed by His Overturning Word, know Who God Is and be drawn into the Reality of His steadfast love.

We can share in His Dying and be changed simply by the proclamation of His Gospel.

The proclamation of the Gospel is the ongoing revelation of the Crucified Christ to wounded souls and hardened hearts in the wilderness of everyday life.

Gods and strangers can be changed by His News.
The Crucified Christ will change us by His News.

The announcement of His News, the proclamation of His Gospel, is a light that won't go out.

What does it mean that the proclamation of His Gospel is a light that can't go out?

It means that even in though we are hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled, and selfish,

There is a light that can be held out to the wounded soul, the hardened heart, in the shrieking fog of lies, and the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble.

A light to cleanse our selfish pride,
A light to mend the wounded soul
A light to withstand lies.

A light to make a way through the shrieking fog of lies and the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble.

The proclamation of His Gospel, the announcement of His News, is a light that won't go out. The ongoing revelation of the Crucified Christ to wounded souls and hardened hearts. A light of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth. A light of Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest.

A light that can change us.
A light that changes wounded, selfish people
A light that turns gods and strangers into His servants and guests.

How is this News announced?

It is announced by water and called Holy Baptism
It is announced by bread and wine and called Holy Communion.

More regularly, it is announced by the preaching, teaching, contemplation and reading of Holy Scripture

What about His Spirit? What is that about?

The Holy Spirit is God but also the One who brings Christ's own presence to us, shepherding those who have received His News to follow Him where He's going.

The guidance of His Spirit is the thread of His Way, the path of His own obedience and faithfulness and life that we walk alongside and retrace with Him in real time in our own life.

The guidance of His Spirit is a thread that will not break in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness. An unbreakable thread of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth. An unbreakable thread of Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest.

To be guided by His Spirit is to share in His Rising, receiving the the gift of His Company and being shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ, being carried in His Solemn Procession, following Where God's Going and being drawn to the Reality of His involvement.

We can share in His Rising and be shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ simply by being guided by His Spirit. The guidance of His Spirit is the ongoing pull of the Crucified and Risen Christ on wounded souls and hardened hearts.

What does that mean in everyday life?

It means that even though we are hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled, and selfish, there is an

an unbreakable thread that tugs on and pulls on gods and strangers, on wounded souls with hardened hearts, leading them through the shrieking fog of lies and the impenetrable wilderness of suffering and trouble.

an unbreakable thread that
cleanses the hardened heart,
mends the wounded soul

endures suffering and trouble

And makes a way through the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness

A thread that shepherds us.

A thread that shepherds wounded, selfish people.

A thread that turns gods and strangers into His servants and guests.

What does this have to do with the building of His Fellowship? What does the building of His Fellowship even mean?

The building of His Fellowship is Christ's gathering of His people, a people he promises to live with and be at the center of.

It is a feast for His people,
the feast of Christ and His people

The feast is where people are going
who hold out the light of His News
and head along the thread of His Way.

His Fellowship is the feast of Christ and his people. It is a feast that won't end. A feast of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. A feast of Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest.

To build His Fellowship is to share in His Coming, receive the Gift of His Joy, to be established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing and being drawn into the Reality of His making things right.

We can share in His Coming simply by becoming a part of the building of

His Fellowship. The building of His Fellowship is the ongoing fulfillment of wounded souls and hardened hearts by the Crucified, Risen, Returning Christ.

What does it mean that there is a feast that won't end?

It means that even though we are hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled and selfish.

Even though we still feel like gods and strangers.

There is a feast that will

cleanse the hardened heart

mend the wounded soul

end death, and

destroy the devil

A feast that establishes us.

A feast that establishes wounded, selfish people.

A feast that turns gods and strangers into His servants and guests.

This feast is Christ Himself. The feast is Christ with His people. Our true home.

Okay, so how do you sum up the Means of Grace?

The shorthand for the Means of Grace,

The proclamation of His Gospel,

The guidance of His Spirit,

The building of His Fellowship

is

the light of His News
the thread of His Way
the feast for His People

By which we share in

His Dying,
His Rising,
His Coming

The Means of Grace means that Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ is in the wilderness.

The Means of Grace means wounded, selfish people can still share in
His Goodness, Beauty, and Truth
His Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
His Forgiveness, His Company, His Joy
His Dying, Rising, and Coming
By His Gospel, through His Spirit, in His Fellowship

As they move through the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness of everyday life.

The Means of Grace means His Mercy can still rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God ourselves and to each other.

Wounded, selfish people in the wilderness of fog still have

A light of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,

A thread of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth
A feat of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth

The light of Christ
The thread of Christ
The feast of Christ.

Is His Gospel different than His Spirit and His Fellowship,

There are distinctions, but they are never separate.

His Spirit is the vindication of His Gospel and our preparation for His Fellowship.

And what does this mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to be

changed by the proclamation of His Gospel
shepherded by the proclamation of His Gospel and the guidance of His Spirit
established by the proclamation of His Gospel, the guidance of His Spirit,
and the building of His Fellowship.

II. THE FEAR OF THE LORD THROUGH THE MEANS OF GRACE

Is that all?

Almost.

If we have received Mercy, we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest
the Revelation from God
The Reality of God
The Story of God
In the Person of Christ,
Who gives His Gifts
By sharing the Events of His Life
Through His Means of Grace

But His Means of Grace in this wilderness means we have something else in
this wilderness.

What?

If we have the Means of Grace,
we have the Fear of the Lord.

The Means of Grace
gives us the Fear of the Lord,

The Gift of Faith
The Discipline of Hope
The Agony of Love

What are these things? What is the Gift of Faith?

The Gift of Faith—the rescue of our trust by His Gospel, so that our trust is in the Crucified Christ.

The Gift of Faith happens by the ongoing revelation of the Crucified Christ to the wounded soul and the hardened heart.

Because the Ascended Christ is the Crucified Christ. And the Crucified Christ is alive, in charge, and can be trusted.

When we are rescued by the Ascended Christ, it is our trust that is rescued.

The Gift of Faith means our trust is still rescued by the Crucified Christ through His Means of Grace.

And the Discipline of Hope?

The Discipline of Hope is the leading of our attention by His Gospel and through His Spirit, so that our attention is with the Crucified and Risen Christ.

The Discipline of Hope happens by the ongoing pull of the Crucified and Risen Christ on the wounded soul and hardened heart.

Because the Ascended Christ is the Crucified and Risen Christ. And the Crucified and Risen Christ alive, in charge, and can be trusted.

When our trust is rescued and led it becomes our attention.

When we are led by the Ascended Christ, it is our attention that is led.

The Discipline of Hope means our attention can still be led by the Crucified and Risen Christ through His Means of Grace.

And the Agony of Love?

The Agony of Love is the gift of ourselves to others, so that we are fulfilled by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

This happens by the ongoing fulfillment of wounded, selfish people in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

Because the Ascended Christ is the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

And the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ is alive, in charge, and can be trusted.

The rescue of our trust becomes
the leading of our attention, until it becomes
The gift of ourselves.

What we offer the world so that Christ might gather His People to Himself.

When we are given back to God, ourselves, and each other by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ it is our whole selves that are given. And it is His Fellowship that we are given to.

The Agony of Love means we can be given back to God, ourselves, and each other by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ through His Means of

Grace.

So what is the Fear of the Lord?

The Fear of the Lord is the inheritance of those who have received Mercy.
The inheritance of those who have received Mercy is

The trust rescued by the Crucified Christ
The attention led by the Crucified Risen Christ.
Our selves given by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

If we have received Mercy
then we have the Fear of the Lord.

We can be rescued, led, and given even when we are hurt, scared, upset,
bullied, troubled.

Wounded, selfish people still get to have the Fear of the Lord,
Still get to be rescued, led, and given,

Because Faith is a trust rescued, not by us, but by Crucified Christ—by His
ongoing revelation wounded souls with hardened hearts in the shrieking fog
and impenetrable wilderness.

Because Hope is attention led, not by us, but by the Crucified and Risen
Christ—by His ongoing pull on wounded souls with hardened hearts in the
shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness.

Because Love is our selves given to others, not by us, but by the Crucified,
Risen, and Returning Christ—by His ongoing fulfillment of wounded souls
with hardened hearts in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness.

Faith, Hope, and Love, the Fear of the Lord– is what
His Goodness, Beauty, and Truth
His Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest
His Forgiveness, Company, and Joy
His Dying, Rising, and Coming does to us by the proclamation of His
Gospel, through the guidance of His Spirit, for the building of His
Fellowship.

It is our how we are changed by Mercy.
We can be rescued, led, and given because we are Christians.
We can be rescued, led, and given because we have received Mercy.

If Mercy is What Life's About and what we we need to be okay, then life is
about the Fear of the Lord and the Fear of the Lord is what we need to be
okay.

We need

The Gift of Faith–the rescue of our trust by the proclamation of a Gospel by
which we share in His Dying, receiving the gift of His Forgiveness, being
changed by the Crucified Christ, being claimed by His Overturning Word,
knowing Who God Is and being drawn into the Reality of His steadfast love.

The Discipline of Hope–the leading of our attention by the proclamation of
a Gospel and through the guidance of a Spirit by which we share in His
Rising, receiving the gift of His Company and being shepherded by the
Crucified and Risen Christ, being carried in His Solemn Procession,
following Where God's Going, and being drawn into the Reality of His
involvement.

The Agony of Love–the giving of ourselves by the proclamation of a Gospel,

through the guidance of a Spirit and for the building of a Fellowship by which we share in His Coming, receiving the Gift of His Joy, and being established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being completed by His Joyful End, becoming a part of What God's Doing and being drawn into the reality of His making things right.

What does it mean to have the Fear of the Lord?

The Fear of the Lord is the cleansing of the hardened heart, and the end of our selfish pride. The inheritance of those who have received Mercy.

.

The Fear of the Lord is the end of our selfish pride.

The Fear of the Lord is the the cleansing our selfish pride, the end of counting on ourselves to be okay.

The Fear of the Lord is the end of counting on ourselves when we're hurt, scared, upset.

But is not the end of being hurt, scared, and upset. In some ways, the Fear of the Lord is beginning of being hurt, scared, and upset. It is the beginning of learning that we are hurt, scared, scared and upset.

It's about finding out we are hurt, scared, and upset

It's about finding a different way to be hurt, scared, and upset.

Is the Gift Faith different than the Discipline of Hope and the Agony of Love?

There are distinctions but they are not separate.

The Discipline of Hope is the vindication of the Gift of Faith and our preparation for the Agony of Love, with the Agony of Love as the fulfillment

of the Gift of Faith.

What does it mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

The point of living is to

be changed as our trust is rescued,
shepherded as our attention is led
established as we are given

III. THE MEANS OF GRACE GIVES US A FEAR OF THE LORD THAT MAKES ORDINARY LIFE POSSIBLE

If we have received Mercy, then ,
Then we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God,
The Reality of God and
the Story of God
In the Person of Christ,
who gives us His Gifts
by sharing the Events of His Life

through a Means of Grace
that gives us the Fear of the Lord
And makes Ordinary Life possible

What does that mean?

It means that Mercy is an ordinary life

Because we have
His Goodness, Beauty, and Truth
His Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest
His Forgiveness, Company, and Joy
His Dying, Rising, and Coming,
Through His Gospel, Spirit, Fellowship,
We have the rescue of trust, the leading of attention, and the gift of ourselves

If we can be rescued, led, and given, we can have an Ordinary Life.

Mercy is an Ordinary Life.

Mercy means Ordinary Life is Possible

What kind of Ordinary Life?

An Ordinary Life of

hearing

praying

offering

What is hearing? Is it just listening?

Yes and no.

Hearing is being with Jesus.

Hearing is trusting in Christ by the proclamation of His Gospel,
continuing to be changed by the ongoing revelation of Who He Is,
so that more and more our trust is in the Crucified Christ, and
the Crucified Christ has more and more our trust,

Hearing is only possible by the Gift of Faith,
and it is the deepening of that Faith.

So that we are more and more rescued.

And Christ has more and more of our trust.

And we can trust in Him when we are hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and
troubled.

Hearing is

Us being changed

Trust being rescued,

Shame being clothed,

Lies being withstood

By the light of His News, the ongoing revelation of the Crucified Christ, the
light of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

When the Crucified Christ has more of our trust,

He is able to clothe of our shame, giving us honor

And withstand more of the lies we've been told, giving us clarity

If the Crucified Christ can give us faith, honor, and clarity, then He is the
way out of pride, shame, and lies and He can make us quiet.

We don't become quiet so we can hear. We continue to hear so he can make
us quiet. . Hearing is how He makes us quiet.

Hearing is the hard work of becoming more rescued.

Hearing is hard work of being made quiet.

Hearing is the way out of shame, pride, and lies.

As we hold out the light of His News the Gift of Faith is deepened and more of more of our trust rescued by the proclamation of a Gospel by which share in His Dying and receive the gift of His Forgiveness, so that we are more and more changed by the Crucified Christ, and are claimed more and more by His Overturning Word, knowing more and more of the Who God Is and being drawn more and more into the Reality of His steadfast love.

What about praying? Is it just talking to him?

Yes and no.

Prayer is being with Jesus.

Prayer is trusting Christ with things by His Gospel and through His Spirit, and being taken Where He's Going,

so that more and more our attention is with the Crucified and Risen Christ, and the Crucified and Risen Christ has more of our attention.

And we can trust Christ with how hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled we are.

We cannot trust the Crucified and Risen Christ with things without the Discipline of Hope.

Praying is only possible through the Discipline of Hope, and it is the strengthening of that Hope.

Prayer is hearing His News and heading His Way,

Prayer is
Us being taken Where He's Going
Attention being led
Fear being walked through
Suffering being endured

By the narrow thread of His Way,
By the ongoing pull of the Crucified and Risen Christ,

When the Crucified and Risen Christ has more of our attention,
He is able to walk through more of our fears, giving us strength,
And endure more of life's suffering and trouble, giving us consolation.

If the Crucified and Risen Christ can give us hope, strength, and
consolation, then He is the way through fear, suffering, distraction, and
temptation, and He can make us simple.

We don't become simple so we can pray. Praying makes us simple.

Prayer is the hard work of becoming more led.
Prayer is the hard work of being made simple.
Prayer is the way through fear, suffering, temptation, and trouble.

As we head along the thread of His Way, trusting Crucified and Risen Christ
with more and more things in our life by the proclamation of His Gospel
and through the guidance of His Spirit, the Discipline of Hope is deepened
and more and more of our attention is led by the proclamation of a Gospel
and through the guidance of a Spirit that involves us more and more in His
Rising and the gift of His Company, so that we are more and more
shepherded by the Crucified Christ who's risen, and are carried more and

more in His Solemn Procession, following more and more Where God's Going, and being drawn more and more into the Reality of His involvement.

What about offering? Is it just doing nice things?

Yes and No.

Offering is being with Jesus.

Offering is entrusting ourselves to others by the proclamation of His Gospel, through the guidance of His Spirit, and for the building His Fellowship, and becoming of part of What He's Doing, So that we are more and more fulfilled by Christ, and Christ has more of ourselves.

And we can be entrusted to others even when we're hurt, scared, upset, bullied, and troubled.

Offering is
Us becoming a part
Ourselves being given
Despair being ended
Death and the Devil being overturned
By the feast of His People,
By the ongoing fulfillment of the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ.

Offering is only possible by the Agony of Love, and it is the maturing of that Love. So that we are more and more given. And Christ more and more of ourselves.

As we are more and more given to others by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ,

He can end more of Despair, giving us purpose
And overturn more of the power Death and the Devil, giving us rest.

If the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ can give us love, purpose, and rest, then He is the goodness, beauty meaning and fulfillment we are headed toward and can make us gentle.

Offering is the hard work of becoming more given.
Offering is the hard work of being made gentle.
Offering is the goodness, beauty, meaning, and purpose we are headed toward.

As we hand more of ourselves over to the feast of the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, by the proclamation of His Gospel through the guidance of His Spirit and for the building of His Fellowship, we mature in the Agony of Love by a Gospel, a Spirit, and a Fellowship by which we share in His Coming and receive the gift of His Joy, so that we are more and more fulfilled and established by the Crucified and Risen Christ who'll come again, more and more completed by His Joyful End, becoming more and more a part of What God's Doing and the Reality of His making things right.

So if the Fear of the Lord is the cleansing of the hardened heart, what is an Ordinary Life of hearing, praying, and offering?

If the Fear of the Lord is the cleansing of the hardened heart,

An Ordinary Life of hearing, prayer, and offering is
the way out of pride, shame, and lies
the way through distraction, fear, suffering and temptation
the way toward meaning, purpose, fulfillment and rest.

An Ordinary Life of hearing, prayer, and offering is the

way out of bad things,
through hard things,
toward good things.

The hard work of becoming
More rescued,
More led,
More given

And being made
quiet,
simple,
gentle

Is hearing different than prayer and offering?

There are distinctions but they are never separate.
Prayer is the vindication of hearing and our preparation for offering, with
offering as the fulfillment of hearing.

What does this mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each
other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and
the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

To be
changed by hearing
shepherded by prayer
established by offering
To count on the Means of Grace, so that we grow the Fear of the Lord and
have an Ordinary Life. To count on the Means of Grace and be okay.

PART IV

EVERYDAY RHYTHMS—LEARNING HOW TO BE OKAY

I. THE JOURNEY WE'RE ON

How long will it take for all this to happen? How long before we're His servants and guests instead of gods and strangers? How long before Christ has all of our trust, attention, and ourselves by the proclamation of His Gospel, through the guidance of His Spirit, for the building of His Fellowship? How long before we're completely rescued, completely led, completely given? How long before we're quiet, simple, and gentle?

It will take a lifetime, and more than a lifetime to completely become who we are.

It will take Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ for us to become who we are.

We are a hurt, scared, upset, bullied, troubled, selfish people who are only gradually changed by the Means of Grace,

only gradually deepening in the Fear of the Lord,

only gradually becoming more and more rescued, led, and given.

only gradually handing over more of our trust, attention, and ourselves

only gradually being able to hear, pray, and offer when we are hurt, scared, and upset.

The Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ will only gradually have more of

our trust, our attention, and ourselves, and we will only gradually be more rescued, more led, and more given by the proclamation of His Gospel, through the guidance of His Spirit, for the building of His Fellowship, by which we gradually share more and more in His Dying, Rising, and Coming.

It is a journey, it is gradual.

But even though we are on this journey, there are things we have even at the beginning of this journey.

Because we have received Mercy we have received, we have, at the very beginning,

His Beauty, Goodness, and Truth,
His Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
A Revelation from God
The Reality of God
The Story of God
In the Person of Christ
Who gives us His Gifts
By sharing the Events of His Life
Through a Means of Grace
That gives us The Fear of the Lord
And makes Ordinary Life possible

But because it is a journey, there are also things we're gradually headed toward, things that we don't have until the end of the journey.

there are things we have and things we're headed toward.

That is what it means to receive Mercy.

Receiving Mercy means having something and heading somewhere.

And receiving Mercy means nothing in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness can stop us from

having something and heading somewhere.

What do we have again?

From the very beginning of our journey from gods and strangers to His servants and guests.

We have
His steadfast love and involvement

We have
Who God Is and Where God's Going

We have
The Overturning Word and the Solemn Procession

We have
His Forgiveness and His Company

We have
His Dying and His Rising

We have
The proclamation of His Gospel and the guidance of His Spirit,

We have
The light of His News and the thread of His Way

We have
The Gift of Faith and the Discipline of Hope

We have
A Rescue and Leading

We have
A way out of bad things and A way through hard things

We have
Hearing and Prayer

Things that cannot be taken from wounded, selfish people in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness.

Where are wounded, selfish people headed again?

If we have received Mercy, then wounded, selfish people are headed

Toward
His making things right

Toward
The Reality of what God's doing

Toward
Mercy's Joyful End

Toward
His Joy

Toward
His Coming

Toward
the building of His Fellowship.

Toward
the Agony of Love.

Toward
The gift of ourselves

Toward
offering.

Toward
Good things

Toward
The end of pride

Toward
The end of despair

Toward
The end of death and the devil.

II. THE TIME OF RISEN AND ASCENDED CHRIST

Another way of saying we have something and are headed somewhere is that

We are in time of the Risen and Ascended Christ.

the Christ who died,
the Christ who's risen,
the Christ who has not yet come again.

The Ascended Christ is
the Vindication of the Christ who died and
our Preparation for the Christ who'll come again.

the Vindication of what we have and
our Preparation for where we're headed.

The Ascended Christ is the careful shepherd of wounded, selfish people in
the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness.

The Ascended Christ is our transition.
The Ascended Christ is our transition from gods and strangers into His
guests and servants.

The Ascended Christ is the Solemn Procession from what's been given to
what's been promised.

He is Overturning Word who leads wounded souls with hardened hearts in
Solemn Procession
toward a Joyful End.

We are in Mercy's Solemn Procession.

A time of Vindication and Preparation.

What does it mean that this is a time for Vindication and Preparation?

It means that the things we usually take for granted and don't even know what to do with are an important part of the reality of the Christian life.

Being taken Where He's Going,
Being led by the Crucified and Risen Christ
Being kept in His Company
Being guided by His Spirit
Praying,
Being led
Walking through fear
Enduring suffering and trouble
Way through hard things.

These are realities that it is notoriously hard for Christians to understand or lean into.

We often have an easier wrapping our head around His Gospel than His Spirit,

Easier time, sometimes, of understanding His Forgiveness than His Company,

It is often easier for us to read scripture than to lean into prayer.

It is often easier to imagine we can be rescued from something than led

through something.

It is easier to believe we have a light that changes us than to be assured we also have a thread through the worst that can happen.

But this is partly because we see things such as Prayer, Leading, Spirit, and Resurrection as things in themselves, when what they are meant to be is Vindication and Preparation.

What do you mean?.

Being taken Where He's Going

the Vindication of knowing Who He Is and our Preparation for becoming a part of What He's Doing

Being led by the Christ who's risen is

the Vindication of being rescued by the Christ who died and our Preparation for being given to the Christ who'll come again

The gift of His Company is

the Vindication of the gift of His Forgiveness and our Preparation for the gift of His Joy

Sharing in His Rising is

the Vindication of our sharing in His Dying and our Preparation for sharing in His Coming

The guidance of His Spirit is

the Vindication of the proclamation of His Gospel and our Preparation for the building of His Fellowship

His Way is

the Vindication His News and our Preparation His People

The Discipline of Hope is

the Vindication of the Gift of Faith and our Preparation for the Agony of Love—the fulfillment of the Gift of Faith.

The leading of our attention

is the Vindication of the rescue of our trust and our Preparation for the gift of ourselves.

Our walk through fear is

The vindication of the clothing of our shame and preparation for our confrontation with despair

The enduring of suffering is

The vindication of the withstanding lies and our preparation for the end of death and the devil.

The way through hard things is

the vindication of the way out of bad things and our preparation for the way toward good things.

Being with Christ by praying is

the Vindication of being with Christ by hearing and our preparation for
being with Christ by offering

Being shepherded is

The vindication of being changed our preparation for being established.

Can these things happen in another order?

I'm afraid not. We will have to learn that these things in sequence:
Trusting in Him, we trust Him with things, so He can entrust us to others.

We cannot be given until we've been led.
And we cannot be led until we've been rescued.

But anyone who can be rescued can be led.
Anyone who can be led can be given.

We are in a strange time,

The time of
His Ascension
His Spirit
His Company
His Leading
His Way Through
The time of
Mery's Solemn Procession

III. EVERYDAY RHYTHMS IN THE SHRIEKING FOG AND IMPENETRABLE WILDERNESS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

*How will we learn this sequence? How will we learn the order?
How will we not get disoriented, lost? How will we be assured that all this can
really happen?*

Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay.

Because we have received Mercy, we have
Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,

The Revelation from God

The Reality of God

The Story of God

In the Person of Christ

Who gives us His Gifts

By sharing the Events of His Life

Through His Means of Grace

That creates the Fear of the Lord

That makes it possible to have an Ordinary Life

That we learn through Everyday Rhythms.

Mercy is one last thing—the Everyday Rhythms by which we develop the habit of being with Jesus, deepening in our friendship with His Means of Grace, growing in the Fear of the Lord, and learning what this Ordinary Life is like in the shrieking fog and impenetrable wilderness.

The Everyday Rhythms by which

we develop the habit of being with Jesus
by hearing,
through prayer,
in offering.

Deepening our friendship with
His Gospel,
His Spirit,
His Fellowship

Becoming more and more
rescued,
led,
given

Making our way
out of bad things
through hard things
toward good things.

Being made
quiet,
simple, and
gentle.
This means

The Time of the Risen and Ascended Christ,
The Time of Mercy's Solemn Procession
The Time of Vindication and Preparation
Is the Time of Rhythms and Habits.

Are Rhythms different than Mercy and Offering?

There are distinctions but they are never separate.

Rhythms and Habits are the vindication of His Mercy and preparation for our Offering, with our Offering as the Fulfillment of His Mercy

Rhythms and Habits Habits are the vindication of What We Have and our preparation for Where We're Headed, with Where We're Headed being the fulfillment of What We Have

Habits and Rhythms by which we learn whether it's really possible to be with Christ by hearing, through prayer, and in offering.

Habits and Rhythms by which we learn whether it's really possible to be made quiet, simple, and gentle.

Habits and Rhythms by which we learn whether its really possible to be rescued, led, and given.

Habits and Rhythms by which we learn whether its really possible to Make our way out, our way through, our way toward

Habits and Rhythms by which we learn whether it's really possible to count on the Means of Grace and be okay.

The Time of the Ascended Christ is the Time of Rhythm and Habits.

And it turns each day into a Vindication and Preparation.

But what Rhythms, What Habits?

We cannot develop the Habit of being with Jesus without some Rhythm of Scripture, Prayer, and Service

We cannot develop the habit of being with Jesus without some Everyday Rhythm of Scripture, Prayer, and Service.

Without some Pattern of Devotion. That is what Everyday Rhythms, a Pattern of Devotion.

The Everyday Rhythms by which we develop the habit of being with Jesus are

The vigilant contemplation of Scripture

The diligent attempt of Prayer

The consistent sacrifice of Service

Why do we need Scripture, Prayer, and Service?

We need the vigilant contemplation of Scripture in order to receive His News and have our trust rescued by His Gospel.

In particular we need the Apostle's Creed as the summary of Scripture so we can receive the right News.

We need the diligent attempt of Prayer in order to head His Way and have our attention led by His Gospel and through His Spirit. .

In particular we need the Lord's own prayer, the Lord's Prayer, as the

summary of all Prayer so we can head the right Way.

We need the consistent sacrifice of Service in order to hand ourselves over to His Feast and have ourselves given by the His Gospel, through His Spirit and for His Fellowship.

In particular we need the Ten Commandments as the summary of all Service so we can hand ourselves over to People instead of trying to control them.

If Mercy is What Life's About, and if Mercy is what we need to be okay, then life is about the Everyday Rhythms of Scripture, Prayer, and Service.

By the contemplation of Scripture—with the Apostle's Creed as our guide—we practice receiving His News, our Faith deepened by a Gospel by which we share in in His Dying and receive the gift of His Forgiveness, so that we are more and more changed by the Crucified Christ, and more and more claimed by His Overturning Word, knowing more and more of Who God Is and the Reality of His steadfast love.

Through the attempt of Prayer— with the Lord's Prayer as our guide—we practice heading His Way, our Hope strengthened by a Gospel through a Spirit by which we share in His Rising and receive the gift of His Company, so that we are more and more shepherded by the Crucified and Risen Christ, being carried more and more in His Solemn Procession, more and more able to follow Where God's Going, and knowing more and more the Reality of His involvement.

In the sacrifice of Service—with the Ten Commandments as our guide—we practice handing ourselves over to His people, our Love matured by a Gospel, through a Spirit, and for a Fellowship by which we share in His Coming and receive the gift of His Joy so that we are more and more

established by the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ, being more and more completed by His Joyful End and becoming more and more a part of What He's Doing, and drawn more and more into the Reality of His making things right.

Is there a difference between the contemplation of Scripture, the attempt of Prayer, and the sacrifice Service?

There are distinctions, and yet they are not separate.

The attempt of Prayer is the vindication of the contemplation of Scripture and our preparation for the sacrifice of Service, with the sacrifice of Service as the fulfillment of the contemplation of Scripture.

What does this mean the point of living is?

If Mercy is Goodness, Beauty, and Truth,
If Mercy is Cleansing, Provision, Exorcism, and Rest,
If Mercy can rescue us, lead us, and give us back to God, ourselves and each other,
then Mercy is What Life's About, and what we need to be okay and the point of living is for wounded, selfish people to receive Mercy.

To be
changed by by the proclamation of Scripture
shepherded by attempt of Prayer
established by the sacrifice of Service

IV. THE SHEPHERDS OF OUR THE EVERYDAY RHYTHMS

Why do we need the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments?

The Apostles Creed guards and shepherds the vigilant contemplation of Scripture

The Apostles' Creed preserves what the Gospel is. It preserves who Jesus is so He can be rescued by His Gospel and changed by Who He Is.

The Lord's Prayer guards and shepherds the diligent attempt of Prayer

The Lord's Prayer preserves our understanding of where the Spirit is leading us. It preserves where the Crucified and Risen Christ leads us so we can be shepherded by His Spirit and taken Where He's Going.

The Ten Commandments guards and shepherds the consistent sacrifice of Service.

The Ten Commandments tell us how to honor His Fellowship. It preserves how the Crucified, Risen, and Returning Christ would have us be given so we can be established in His Fellowship and become a part of What He's Doing.