

The Simplicity That Is In Christ

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It is no secret, that in this world, everything is becoming increasingly complicated. Nothing is simple anymore. Dorothy and I mention this to each other often. Mankind inspired by Satan, tends to complicate all things. When I was a kid, if you wanted ice cream, you had three choices, vanilla, chocolate and strawberry. Now there are thirty-one flavors at one place, but if you went to a grocery store, you could probably find more than that. When you try to call a business and talk to a human being, you get, "Our menu has changed, so please listen carefully." You sit there for two or three minutes and they list a dozen different numbers to press for a dozen different problems, none of which have any relation to your problem. You try to talk to a human and it just doesn't work and it starts the cycle all over again.

Try filling out your income tax forms. Subtract line five from line six and multiply .000 and add 4,520 and then if that is greater than line three, do this. Then your eyes glaze over.

Try to enroll for Obama Care. It's the same thing. As a result of all of this today, people feel confused, frustrated and alienated as though no one cares. Of course, that's by design.

Satan has done the same thing with religion. He causes confusion. Nobody cares and everyone is frustrated.

Let's take an example of this. Today we're going to talk about the Catholic Church to indicate how life is complicated. The Catholic Church says that in order to go to God, you must go through a priest. If you want to understand doctrine, you go to the priest and he will explain doctrine to you.

This is all by way of introduction. Let's look at the Catholic teaching about the trinity. Let me read from the Catholic Encyclopedia under "Trinity, Holy", page 295. Now listen carefully.

It is difficult in the second half of the twentieth century (my copy is dated then) to offer a clear, objective and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution and theological elaboration of the mystery of the trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette.

That is a kind way to say, "We've had 1,700 years to get this right and we still don't know what we're talking about."

There are few teachers of Trinitarian theology in Roman Catholic seminaries who have not been badgered at one time or another by the question, "How does one teach the trinity?" If the question is symptomatic of the confusion on the part of the students, perhaps it is no less symptomatic of similar confusion on the part of the professors.

So the Catholic Church says if you want to understand the doctrine, you go to the priest and the priest will explain it to you, and on the other hand, they're saying this thing is a mystery. They don't even know how to teach it because their professors don't understand it. So everything is fuzzy and unclear. So at the end of the day priests say (as Protestant ministers say too), "It is a holy mystery. We just cannot understand it. It is way too complicated for the human mind to understand."

The Worldwide Church of God went through this at the end before we left. We were told that the average church member doesn't have the tools to properly understand doctrine. Quoting from the Pastor General's Report, Joseph W. Tkatch is writing, December 31, 1991:

The church highly respects the need for deeper theological work. It believes that a full and accurate statement on the nature of God would be a major achievement in the history of dogmatics.

If you knew Joseph Tkatch, he never spoke in those terms, so this was obviously written for him. But the fact is that "dogmatics" means *true principles*. What he is saying is that the church has to do further work to understand the true principles of the nature of God.

In the meantime, it defers to experts whose task is to dissect, analyze and define what normally lies beyond the resources of the vast majority of believers.

He is basically saying that the truth is too complicated for the average church member to understand.

I had dinner with Joe Tkatch, Jr. once. He came to the area and I happened to be sitting next to him and I asked him about the trinity.

I asked, "Why can't you explain it clearly, simply and understandably?"

He said that the greatest minds in the world have worked on this for centuries and we have to yield to their understanding.

I said, "But those great minds never had God's holy spirit and they weren't converted."

He looked at me like I was nuts. He had this blank look like he didn't understand what I was talking about. It was frustrating and I thought to myself, "Man, we are in real trouble here." To this very day, none of the Protestants, Catholics or the current Worldwide Church of God teachers, ministers or members, can explain the trinity

because it is so complex and complicated. It is not understandable. I might add that it is not understandable because it is not true.

Years ago (we haven't gotten to the subject yet) a very respected and world-renown electrical engineer told me something I have never forgotten. We were in the consumer electronics audio business. I happened to be in a room where he was and it was just the two of us. He was the chief engineer of a high-end Japanese audio company and I asked him, "Why do amplifiers sound different? They look the same on the outside and made by two different manufacturers. They may be close in price, but you listen to this one through a good set of speakers, but they sound different. Their specifications are almost identical, yet they sound different. Why is that?" He smiled and said three words, "Simple is best." Simple electronics circuits sound better than complicated ones. I found that to be true. The simpler something is, the better it performs and the more reliable it is and it does a better job.

That concept, simple is best, is evident in design. Look at jewelry, clothes, buildings, and automobiles. A simple design looks so much better than something that is complicated. This is evident in manufacturing. When Toyota was on the rise fifteen or twenty years ago, I read an article where they looked at their front bumper and it had twenty-two pieces in it. Some bright engineer figured out how to make it with five pieces. There was less assembly time and it was more reliable, all due to a simplified design.

Simple also is evident in true science. Have you heard of a Japanese man named Michio Kaku? If you watch science programs on TV or PBS, he has shoulder-length grey hair. He talks about science in many ways. He wrote a book called Einstein's Cosmos in 2004. On page 13, notice what he says.

Einstein's theories are based not so much on arcane mathematics (arcane means *difficult to understand*), but simple physical pictures. Einstein would often comment that if a new theory was not based on a physical image simple enough for a child to understand, it was probably worthless. Einstein used simple pictures in his theories of relativity so that people could understand it.

It is very true. The fact is that "simple is best" is a Godly principle. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 11:3. As times get more complicated and as people and things try to crash in on our minds, our time and energy, we must remember that "simple is best" is something that comes from God.

2 Corinthians 11:3. *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for "corrupted" means *to shrivel*. He is saying, "I'm worried that your minds are shriveling." It can mean *defile or destroy*. He's saying that, "I'm worried that your minds should be defiled or destroyed or corrupted from:

3b) ... from the simplicity that is in Christ. (KJV)

The Greek word for “simplicity” is Strong’s 572, and it’s “haplotes.” It means *simplicity* and also *singleness*. In other words, something that is single is not complicated. It’s easy to perceive and see.

Let’s ask the question as we get closer to the subject. Why would God call the weak of the world to a truth that is too complex for them to understand? Why would He do that?

Let’s go 1 Corinthians 1:24 about our calling. We will dissect this and get to the point. We will talk later about calling as being something that is relative to the simplicity that is in Christ. Notice what Paul says.

1 Corinthians 1:24. *But unto them which are called... (KJV)*

Before you can come to Christ and the Father, you must be called.

24b) ... both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh ... (KJV)

The Greek word for “wise” means exactly what it says.

26b) ... not many mighty...

The Greek word for “mighty” means *powerful or strong*.

26 continued) ... not many noble, are called: (KJV)

The Greek for “noble” means *high rank or well born*. Not many of those are called.

27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ... (KJV)

The Greek word for “foolish things” (two English words) is one Greek word, and that is Strong’s 3474 and it is “moros.” Now this is describing all of us. It means *dull, stupid or morally a blockhead*. We get the English word “moron” from this Greek word, “moros.” So whether we like to believe it or not, it’s true. We are the not very wise and we can be blockheads at times and we can be flat-out stupid at times.

We have to understand that, but the good news is, through Christ, we don’t have to remain that way. If we exercise God’s holy spirit, we will not remain that way.

27b) ... and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (KJV)

The English words “weak things” is from one Greek word, which is Strong’s 772. It is “asthenes” and it means, literally, figuratively or morally *strengthless*. It can also mean *feeble or impotent*. We have no power, and I think we know that. The longer we are in the church; we realize that outside of God, we have no power. We all know from our own experience that this is true.

28) And base things of the world ... (KJV)

“Base things” is from one Greek word, “agenes”, Strong’s 36, and it means *without kin*, that is of *unknown descent* or *ignoble*. None of us come from a long line of Russian czars or English kings or anything like that. We are the base things of the world.

28b) ... and things which are despised, has God chosen... (KJV)

“Despised” means *contemptible* or *least esteemed*. None of us walked in on an elevated platform into God’s church with an entourage. That’s not us. That’s not who God called.

28 continued) ... yes, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: (KJV)

29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (KJV)

The New English Bible says:

29) There is no place for pride in the presence of God. (NEB)

Boy is that true. So God has chosen each of us, not near the smartest, not near the strongest and without any kind of pedigree. That’s all of us, and yet He promises us to be able to understand His word. Let’s go to 1 Corinthians 2:10 out of the NLT.

1 Corinthians 2:10. *But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets. (NLT)*

It’s possible that the weak of the world can understand God’s truth through the power of the holy spirit.

Today we’re going to look at some areas where these “great minds” that were talked about have gone so far off base it is ridiculous with complicated understandings and explanations and interpretations of God’s word and they have refused to believe the simple truths of the Bible. This is why modern Christianity has gone astray and, frankly, it’s one of the reasons that the Jews have lost their way. Look at what the Jews have done; the first five books of the Bible, the Torah. They can be printed out in about 350 pages. Now the Talmud attempts to explain the Torah. Guess how long the Talmud is.

It takes 523 books printed on 22 volumes. In standard print, it is over 6,200 pages. It is almost eighteen times larger than the Torah. Talk about complication, this is one of the reasons why the Jews have lost their way. Modern Christianity has lost its way. Hopefully today we're going to see that the simplicity of Christ answers questions mankind has been struggling with since day one. The title of the sermon is:

The Simplicity That Is In Christ

We're going to talk about seven simple truths. Those seven are by no means all, but just seven that I came up with to illustrate the point.

Point 1: The simplicity of Christ is reflected in the simplicity of the basic nature of God.

And the fallacy of the trinity, by the way. As I said, men are unable to explain the trinity. Joseph Tkatch in that Worldwide News article of December 23, 1991, said:

The trinity doctrine is beyond our human ability to grasp. We're teaching you a doctrine that you or any other human being cannot grasp.

In that article, he called the trinity a mystery. The Catholic Encyclopedia says this:

St. Jerome (a Catholic scholar who died in 420 A.D.) says in a well-known phrase, 'The true profession of the mystery of the trinity is to own that we do not comprehend it.'

Wow. It just boggles the mind. But look at the simplicity of God's word. Look at how simple it is. Let's go to John 1. It's interesting that the very first verse of the Apostle John's gospel explains it. We will elaborate a little as we go through.

John 1:1. In the beginning ... (KJV)

This says clearly that Christ wasn't created.

1b) ... was the Word... (KJV)

The Greek word for "word" is Strong's 3056, and as we know, it means *logos*.

1 continued) ... and the Word [logos] was with God... (KJV)

"God" is Strong's 2316; that is "theos."

1 continued) ... and the Word [logos] was God [theos]. (KJV)

By the way, there is no mention of a third being here. It's a perfect opportunity to do so, but it's not there. We know they are separate beings, the Logos and the Theos because the Father spoke to the Son.

Matthew 3:16. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (KJV)*

Jesus approached John the Baptist and it was time for Him to be baptized. A voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." There is one being talking to the other. By the way, again there is no mention of a third. This was a perfect opportunity to do so. One being is talking to another, very simple. There are two. We know they are separate beings because Christ prayed to the Father when He was on the cross and the two guys were around Him and all the others were mocking him.

Luke 23:34. *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. (KJV)*

The Logos was talking to the Theos, two separate beings and no mention of a third. We know they are separate beings because they sit on the throne side by side.

Hebrews 12:2. *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [alpha and omega] of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (KJV)*

How can you explain this if you're trying to say there are three, but they are all one and somehow they are not different and they are not separate beings? The mind just starts scrambling. But it's so simple. The Theos is there and on His right side, the Logos is right there and there is no mention of a third. If there were three and you were talking about heaven and the throne of God, why isn't it there?

Now look at the clincher. The Father knows something the Son does not. If you were all one, everyone would know everything. But the fact that one knows something that the other doesn't clearly shows that there are two separate beings. They must be separate. Here in Matthew it's talking about the end of the age and Christ is telling everyone that nobody knows when it's going to happen.

Matthew 24:36. *But of that day and hour [when everything is fulfilled] knows no man ... (KJV)*

The word "man" is in italics. It's not there. We would say, no being, no person, nobody.

36b) ... no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (KJV)

Christ is saying, "I don't know. When He gives the sign, when He throws the switch, I'm coming, but I don't know. That is up to Him."

So you see that it is very clear that if the Father knows something that the Son doesn't, they must be separate beings. Again, there is no mention of a third.

There is nowhere in these verses and many other verses where three are mentioned, even though it would be the perfect place and time to bring up a third separate being, but you cannot find it. It's not there. There are only two.

This is illustrated in nature. Look at us; we are bilaterally symmetrical. The right side is the same as the left side. We have two nostrils, two eyes, two ears, two hands, and two feet. In the animal kingdom it is the same thing. God is trying to give us a message here. There are not three's. We don't have an eye in the middle of our forehead, contrary to Greek mythology. God is giving us a message.

Their nature is love. We know that in 1 John 4:4 and 16. God repeats it when He wants it emphasized. Their nature is love. It is all so simple, the simplicity that is in Christ.

Point Two: There is the simple difference between good and evil.

Christ made that difference so easy to understand as Kaku was talking about Einstein. Even a child could understand it. No huge grey areas at all. In the Old Covenant, supreme evil brought death, and very quickly by the way. There were no insanity pleas or psychological evaluations. There was no death row for decades under the old covenant.

In the new covenant, evil brings death. Romans 6:23 states; *The wages of sin is death.* Christ drew the contrast and explained the difference between good and evil in such a way that anybody with a mind could understand it. Here is Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He is drawing a picture that is so clear and easy to understand.

Matthew 6:22. *"The lamp [source of light] of the body is the eye (NKJV)*

The eye allows light to come into the body.

22b) ... If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23) But if your eye is bad [clouded over or poked out], your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (NKJV)

How bad is it if there is no light inside you?

The apostles carried on that same concept. They understood it. Here is teaching about good and evil, the analogy. John is looking back and saying, "This is the message we heard in the beginning.

1 John 1:5. *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

6) *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

7) *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another [likeminded human beings], and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (NKJV)*

He said, "You want to be part of the fellowship, then you walk in the light as Christ walks in the light as God is the light. But if you want trouble, walk in darkness because your life is going to be misery and full of problems."

Light versus dark, good versus evil; it is so simple to understand.

Point Three: The third simplicity that is in Christ is understanding why there is so much evil in the world.

Given the evil in the world and what has happened in the last few years, unspeakable evil, beheadings, burnings, capturing children and sending them into slavery. Once in a while on the news, men are just mystified why there is so much evil. They can't understand it. I've heard people say, "How can there be a loving God that allows so much evil?" Or I heard people say, "I refuse to worship a God who allows such evil." They use that as an excuse to just toss over all religion.

The answer is so simple. The first two human beings made a fateful decision in Genesis 3. They chose to reject God. They chose to listen to the devil. John 16:11 calls him the prince of this world. Rather than listen to their creator, they chose to listen to the prince of this world. That was a free choice that they made. They chose to decide for themselves what is good and what is evil, according to their own definition, not God but according to what they decide for themselves. All mankind since that day has been following in their footsteps. After that day, God left mankind to determine his own future, to chart his own course, to make his own decisions. And God hid His truth from that day forth from mankind, other than those He would call as we will see. The point is that God backed off because man didn't want Him. Humanity doesn't understand that basic truth. Let's go to Matthew 11:25. There is so much evil in this world because man chose to listen to the devil and follow in the devil's footsteps and look at what we've got today. The context here is that Christ is condemning the Jews.

Matthew 11:25. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (KJV)*

The babes are the ones who are not so smart, have no power, have no pedigree and are weak and small. He said, "I've revealed them unto these babes and I've hid these things from these geniuses that try to explain things that are beyond their capability and understanding. Again, God left mankind to pay the price for his decisions.

Galatians 6:7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. (KJV)*

God said, “You want to decide for yourself, have at it. You chart your own way and I’m stepping out of the picture, but understand that you will reap what you sow. You’re going to have to deal with your own decisions. You’re going to have to deal with your own human nature.” We’re seeing the fruits of that today in spades.

Man doesn’t understand that God isn’t dealing with the world because of man’s decisions. He is dealing only with a few. Remember in 1 Corinthians 1:26:

1 Corinthians 1:26. *For you see your calling ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for “calling” is Strong’s 282 and its “klesis.” It means simply an *invitation*. Paul says, “You see the fact that you have been invited. You have been called. Let’s turn to Romans 8:28 with that in mind. Keep in mind Strong’s 2821, “klesis”, an invitation. This is a scripture we need to keep in mind especially with all the health issues and problems that are going on, and people facing the end of their life.

Romans 8:28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God... (KJV)*

Is that ever true.

28b) ... to them who are the called according to his purpose. (KJV)

We all need to keep that in mind even on our death bed.

The Greek word for “called” here is Strong’s 2822, “kletos” and is one digit away from klesis. Regarding this Greek word is “kletos,” Strong’s says, “From the same as 2821, *invited or appointed*. Some people are called according to His purpose.

God is not at war with Satan as “Christianity” (the Catholic Church) claims. They say that God is in this tremendous war around the world and we have to send missionaries here and there because we have to win this battle. Well, if that is the case, God is losing big time, but that is not the case. The point is that the simplicity that is in Christ, people don’t understand that not everyone is being called. God is not dealing with everybody right now and that explains why there is so much evil in the world based on the decisions that Adam and Eve made. It is all so simple.

Point Four: The simplicity of God’s law.

Man complicates it. It just opens Pandora’s box. Man says there are no moral absolutes. That means that there are no true moral laws, no matter what.

When I was in college (I think God was calling me then), I was searching for the truth. I was going to a Presbyterian church in graduate school. I asked a Presbyterian minister: "Are there any moral absolutes?" I clarified it. I said, "Are there any laws in the Bible, like the Ten Commandments, that are always true with no variance at all?" He looked me right in the eye and said, "No."

I said, "Then, it's okay sometimes to kill, commit adultery or lie or whatever." He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, how do you know then?" I was really getting confused.

He said, "Well, you tell me the circumstances and I will tell you whether it's right or not." I said, "You're going to tell me what is right and wrong and not what's in the Bible? He said, "Yes, we have to interpret the Bible according to modern customs, etc."

I thought to myself, "This can't be good. This can't be true. You just can't do this."

In other words, he was saying that everyone decides for themselves. Or if they can't decide, the priest or their minister decides for them. But one way or another, God doesn't decide, they decide.

Modern Christianity said that Christ did away with the law. To be a Christian, you don't have to keep the law. Why? because the law was nailed to the cross. Christ lived a perfect life for us on our behalf; therefore, we don't have to be perfect. All we have to do is believe. That is modern Christianity's interpretation. This interpretation makes people feel good. I don't have the pressure to obey. I don't have to deal with this harsh Old Testament law or this harsh old God of the Old Testament. In other words, it makes people feel good because you don't have to work at being a Christian. You don't have to work. You just have to believe.

Christ gave a simple answer about the law. It's recorded three times: in Matthew 22, Mark 12 and John 14 and 15.

A man asked Him: "What is the greatest commandment?" He's expecting one answer and Christ said that you must love God with all your being, with everything you have. The second is like unto it; you must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. Then it is very clear as He stated in His first sermon, that the Ten Commandments are an expansion or expounding on those two great commandments. The first four amplify the first great commandment and the last six amplify the second, not in 6,500 pages and 523 books. It is so simple and easy to understand. Look at Matthew 5:1, the beginning of Christ's first sermon, The Sermon on the Mount. Christ sees this gigantic crowd gathering around Him. He wants to get away, so we are told that He heads up to the mountains.

Matthew 5:1. *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*

2) And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, ... (KJV)

He is not teaching the multitudes, He's teaching the disciples. Verse 17 is in regard to the law.

17) Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Some translations say, *fill to the full*.

18) For verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (KJV)

"Jot and tittle" both mean a *minute part of something*. We would say today, dotting an "i", crossing a "t." Those are jots and tittles.

19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)

If the law is done away, why would He say this?

20) For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)

If the law is done away, He couldn't say that. He said, "Your righteousness, your commandment keeping has to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. So how could He do that if the law was done away?"

Notice the apostles' simple answer regarding the law.

James 1:22. *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (KJV)*

Paul said in Hebrews 3:13 that sin is deceitful. He talked about the deceitfulness of sin. Paul said that if you are hearers only, if you think all you need to do is sit in the audience and hear and just believe and you don't have to do anything, you're deceiving yourselves. He said that the doers of the word and not hearers only are the ones that will be saved. The truth about the law is so simple.

Point Five: The simplicity of understanding salvation.

Modern Christianity says, "Once saved – always saved." Once you give your heart to the Lord and make this commitment, from that point on you are saved, you are guaranteed eternal life, and guaranteed a place in God's Kingdom. Once you give yourself to the Lord, you are saved no matter what.

What did we just read in Matthew 5:20?

Matthew 5:20. *For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)*

How do you reconcile that with saying “Once saved – always saved and all you have to do is believe”? Christ Himself said that our righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Boy, did they keep the commandments. They kept them physically, but we understand that we have to keep them spiritually. How can that be? What these men don’t realize is that Christianity is a way of living, a way of life. Look at Acts 19:23. It kind of hit me when I came into the church. It’s not just the fact that you go to Sabbath services and listen and then go about your daily life. It isn’t that way at all.

Acts 19:23. *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way [Christianity]. (KJV)*

The Greek word for “way” means *a mode of behavior or a road or path to walk down*. In other words, there was no small stir about a way of living, not just a set of beliefs. So you see we are judged today upon the whole, the entirety of our life, not just some emotional moment in time when you say, “Lord, I give my life to you.” Thirty seconds later you are saved and everything is fine. You don’t have to change the way you live. You don’t have to change the way you think or behave. That’s the way modern Christianity looks at that. No one emotional moment in time, but we are judged on the entirety of our life once we make the commitment at baptism.

Our words, our deeds, our thoughts are what we are judged on over a period of time, not one instant in time. Frankly, that is good because we slip and fall, we make mistakes and God gives us this window of time to repent and to change and we get a do-over to see if next time we do it better. Over time, we start climbing the ladder so to speak closer to being like Jesus Christ. But you see, in the end, salvation is still a gift. We don’t work our way to salvation. We can’t earn our way to salvation because none of us is worthy of salvation. None of us is worthy to be saved. Let’s go to Romans 6:23. Normally we focus on the first part of this verse and sometimes we forget the second part. We cannot earn salvation.

Romans 6:23. *For the wages of sin is death ... (KJV)*

There was great emphasis on that when I came into the church. The good news is:

23b) ... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (KJV)

It is made possible through Jesus Christ, our Lord through His sacrifice, through what He did for us, through His death and His resurrection. Salvation is a gift. We are judged over a period of time. It is so simple and easy to understand.

Point Six: The keeping of the Sabbath and the holy days.

People say, "How can you do that? It's so hard. What do we keep?" Man says that the Sabbath and the holy days were done away along with the law of Moses. Modern Christianity says that. "Don't keep the Sabbath and don't keep the holy days because that was done away along with the law of Moses." Some people today say we should keep no days. You can keep them in your heart, but you don't have to keep any day. Other people say, "I keep every day in my heart, so I don't have to keep any single day." Other people meet on different days and it's just a mass of confusion.

Christ said something so simple. If the Sabbath was done away, how do you explain Mark 2:27? How can you explain that? If it's of no consequence, Christ never kept the Sabbath, the apostles weren't to keep the Sabbath and we weren't to keep the Sabbath, how do you explain this verse? It's so simple.

Mark 2:27. *And he [Christ] said unto them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: (KJV)*

The Sabbath was created for man. The Sabbath was created at the very beginning and it was created for the benefit of man. Christ said it. He said that the Sabbath is very important and was created for our benefit. Then modern Christianity turns around and says, "No, you don't have to keep the Sabbath." How can you justify that? How can you say that Christ did away with the Sabbath when He said that the Sabbath was made for man?

God made the Sabbath over two thousand years before Moses was ever conceived. Think about that. God made the Sabbath at creation, Genesis 3. Think about that. How can the Sabbath be done away with the doing away of the old covenant when it preceded it by over two thousand years? Then with the coming of the manna in Exodus 16, Christ, the God of the Old Testament re-identified the Sabbath because they had lost it. This was long before the Ten Commandments were given. It was long before the old covenant was ever ratified. So how can you say that when the old covenant was done away, the Sabbath was done away when it long preceded the old covenant?

Christ kept the Sabbath. Luke 4:16; I think we understand that scripture.

Luke 4:16. *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom [habit] was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. (KJV)*

That was His habit. That was His custom. How can you say He did away with it? The apostles kept the Sabbath. Acts 13:14, the apostles kept the Sabbath, but notice this. If the Sabbath was done away, how do you explain these series of verses?

Acts 13:14. *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. (KJV)*

We understand that. That's where the Jews were initially and they would preach where the Jews would congregate.

42) And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue ... (KJV)

After they preached the gospel...

42b) ... the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. (KJV)

Now why would the Gentiles want to meet on the next Sabbath to hear what the apostles had to say if the Sabbath was of no consequence and if it was done away with?

43) Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44) And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. (KJV)

If the Sabbath didn't mean anything, why did they assemble on the Sabbath, especially the Gentiles and people of the city? Why would they come out if the Sabbath was not in force?

We know that the apostles kept Passover and the holy days. We memorialized that recently. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. Why would these words be in there if the Sabbath and holy days were not to be kept? Paul says:

1 Corinthians 5:7. *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened ... (KJV)*

He's talking about being unleavened physically, therefore if you're unleavening yourself and taking leaven out of your house, you're keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread.

7b) ... For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

This is clearly indicating that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover and, therefore, it must be kept.

*8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
(KJV)*

How can you say these days are done away with and read this scripture? You can't. Now go to chapter 11 and verse 26. How long should we keep these days? Was it done just in the early New Testament Church or when Christ lived or while the apostles were still alive?

1 Corinthians 11:26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he comes. (KJV)*

How long do we do it? We do it until He returns. What very learned men, very intelligent men, very smart men don't understand is that keeping the Sabbath and holy days is something that all mankind needs. It is essential. The purpose of the Sabbath and the holy days is to keep mankind in the true knowledge and worship of the true God, to help us become like God the Father and Jesus Christ. It is all so simple.

Point Seven: Tithing.

The last Simplicity of Christ is tithing. We talked in the beginning about confusion. Call the IRS and get an opinion. Call three IRS agents and you get four or five opinions. Nobody knows. Everyone is confused. Like Catholics and explaining the trinity and you have to go to the priest. To understand the tax code you have to go to the IRS and even they don't know. The accountants don't know. It is all so unbelievably complicated.

Look at the simplicity of God's way. It's ten percent. Occasionally a modern politician will propose a flat tax and they recommend ten percent and they get shouted down and hooted away because it's so simple. The problem is though today in God's Church, (and this is the sad thing), there are those who want to do away with tithing and do not tithe. They want to do away with this simple commandment. Too many today say you don't have to tithe. We're part of the new covenant and not the old covenant and you don't have to tithe. The crazy thing about it is the logic that they use about not having to tithe is the same logic that the Catholics and Protestants use when they do away with the Sabbath and the holy days. They say the Sabbath and holy days are part of the old covenant and are done away with. Members of God's church today say that tithing is done away with for the same reason. They say it's part of the old covenant and you don't have to keep it. It just boggles the mind. You ask the question that if the old covenant is done away as you say the "Christians" do where you don't have to keep the Sabbath and holy days, but they would say that they're putting tithing in that group but they still keep the Sabbath. How does that work? It doesn't make any sense. They use the very same logic that the Catholics and Protestants use to do away with the Ten Commandments in doing away with tithing.

The fact is that tithing, the Sabbath and the holy days are all together. They are of the same piece of cloth. All existed before the law of Moses, before the old covenant. Tithing was in existence long before Moses and the law. Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec. You can check that out in Genesis 14. The apostles taught tithing. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 9. Paul was dealing with this very dysfunctional church, in many ways this very backward church. Yes, they were new and they were a mixture of Gentiles and Jews. They were in one of the most horrible places in the world to live as far as morals and ethics.

1 Corinthians 9:13. *Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? ...*

"Don't you understand that the priests that work in the temple get paid by the temple?"

13b) ...and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? (KJV)

They do the sacrifices. They get some of the meat. "You understand that" he is saying.

14) Even so has the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (KJV)

Meaning through the tithes and offerings of those God has called and converted. Look at Hebrews 7. The context of the chapter is tithing. People say, "Well, it's kind of fuzzy about tithing. It's not clear." Well, read Hebrews, chapter 7. It is so simple. It is so easy. The context is tithing and we're going to break into verse 6.

Hebrews 7:6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham ... (KJV)*

Abraham tithed to Melchisedec

6b) ... and blessed him that had the promises. (KJV)

Melchisedec blessed Abraham because of the promises given.

11) If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? (KJV)

If the Levitical priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood was perfect, why did another priesthood come along, referring to Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec?

12) For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (KJV)

The Greek word for “change” is Strong’s 3331. Zodhiates in the Complete Word Study of the New Testament, that this Greek word is “metathesis” and it means *to transfer*. Zodhiates says: *To transfer with the meaning of removal from one place to another place*. We get our English word “metastasize” from that. When you say that cancer metastasizes, it goes from one place to another place. So the meaning of the word “change” is to remove from one place and put it in another place.

What Paul is referring to here in Hebrews is the law of tithing, not that the law was done away with, but the law of tithing was changed. It means the recipients of the tithes were changed. The law itself was not changed. People had to tithe, but the recipients were changed from one priesthood to another priesthood, from the Aaronic priesthood (Levitical priesthood) to the New Testament priesthood which is after the order of Melchisedec under Jesus Christ. It’s sad that those today who withhold tithes, refuse to tithe and think it’s pleasing to God. They miss incalculable blessings from tithing. I can’t tell you the number of times you look, whether its third tithe year or whatever, it just doesn’t add up. God always makes it add up. He always gives blessings. People who are willing to give back to Him, the one who gives us everything, God says, “All I want you to do is give me back ten percent and you can keep the ninety. If you do that faithfully, I will bless you and bless you.” It is so simple and yet people make it so burdensome or so hard or so evil or because there were abuses in the past, they throw the baby out with the bath water.

God’s way compared to man’s way is so simple. Ten percent is very easy to figure out, but man’s way is so complicated.

Let me close with a quote from Oscar Wilde. He was born in 1845 and died in 1900. He was an author and playwright and he was a humorist. He said, “I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.” That is so true. The older we get, the more we appreciate simple pleasures in life. You don’t have to take a cruise somewhere. You don’t have to run from place to place to place.

The older we get, we appreciate a good cup of coffee in the morning for those of us who drink coffee. It’s just wonderful, a good cup of coffee.

A beautiful sunset is a simple pleasure that will never be repeated.

One of my favorites is watching a peaceful snowfall, to sit there and watch the snow gently come down, or go out and walk in it. It is so quiet and peaceful.

Another simple pleasure for those of us who are married is snuggling in bed. The bed is warm and it’s cold outside. What a joy.

Above all the simplicity that we should be appreciating is God’s simple, understandable plan of salvation and His way of life. What a joy.

So we've seen that God has called the weak of the world. As I said earlier, "Why would He call the weak and base and the morons? Why would He call all of us to a truth we could not understand? The answer is that He didn't. He didn't do that at all. Our understanding of the simplicity of Christ is made possible by the Father and the Son dwelling inside us. That is the gift. We read John 14 on Passover evening.

John 14:23. *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (KJV)*

That is how we get this understanding. Again, that is a gift made possible by the power of the holy spirit. In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel is talking to Mary and he said unto her, "The holy spirit is going to come upon you and overshadow you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you." When the power of the Highest comes to us by the Father and the Son living in us, it gives us (the weak of the world) the ability to understand these simple truths that these great minds, these high I.Q. people cannot comprehend. They blow it off. It's too simple. No, simple is best.

One final point: The simplicity of Christ implies something that pertains to each one of us. We, the ones that have received the calling and invitation to this simple way of life, we have an obligation to simplify our lives, to make our lives less complicated. We have an obligation to do things to simplify our lives (remember the definition is single) so we can single mindedly focus on loving God with all our heart, loving our neighbor as ourselves, become more and more like the Father and the Son and focus on being the bride at the wedding ceremony and being ushered into the Kingdom of God. We need to uncomplicate our lives to make that singular focus and be able to do that.

In closing, let's understand the simplicity of Christ that has escaped the greatest minds of the world. Let's be thankful for it and as we go forward from Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, let's focus on all aspects of the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ.