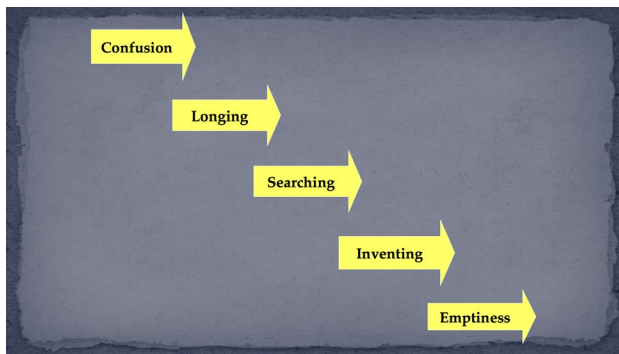
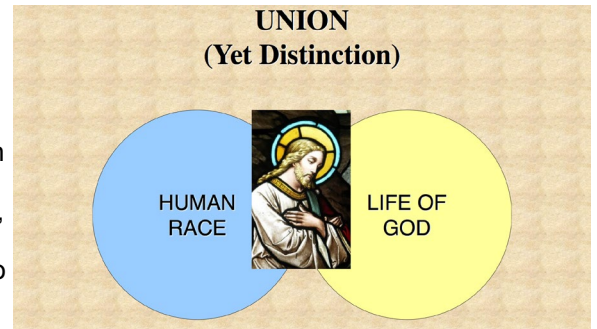




What is the Gospel? (Part 2)

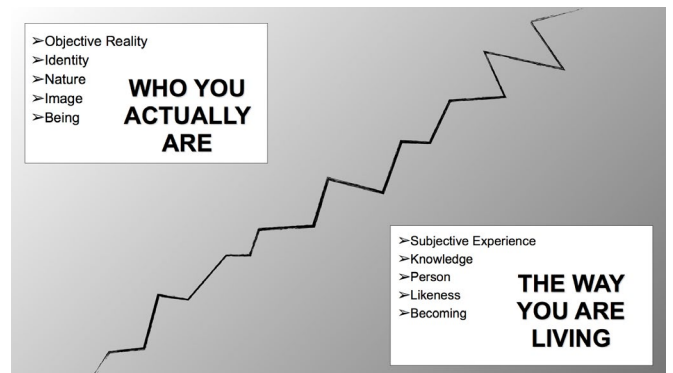
The essence of the Gospel is not that we can receive Jesus into our lives, rather it is the amazing news that Jesus has already received us into his life. All of Adam's race has been gathered into one new race under the headship of the last Adam, Jesus Christ. Jesus has forged an objective union with mankind, yet within that union and connection is a distinction. We are connected to the life of God but not absorbed. We are not lost in the process, and all of us have our own distinct mind, heart, and will. In our distinction, it very possible that we will become darkened in our understanding and blind to what God has made of us in Jesus.



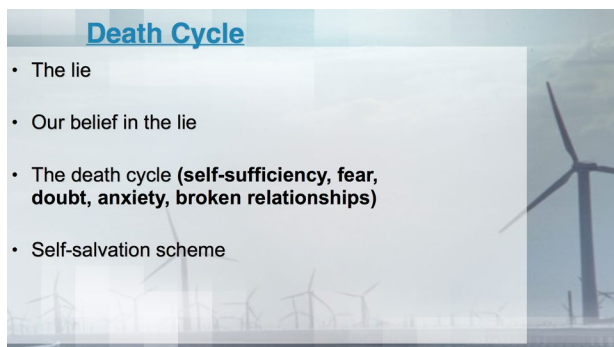
Our blindness, confusion, and wrong-headed thinking often “short-circuit” the life of God that is constantly being shared with us. Jesus has made an everlasting covenant with us, but it is possible to be so lost, dazed, and confused about it that we shut down the life of Christ that is at work in us. This begins to explain how the human race can be bound up in this relationship with the life of God and yet still experience so much discord, chaos, bitterness, factions, war, enmity, and evil among us. The fog of our confusion and darkness reduces our ability to see who we really are. The evil one whispers his lies, and we give those errors a foothold in our existence by our belief in them. This causes a stirring in our depths that moves us to go out and create a new self—a self that is acceptable to God and the world.

We move from one thing to another, always trying to find “home.” We try to heal this rift between our identity (who we really are—who God has made us) and our experience. We try and become who we already are (ever trying to arrive where Jesus has already landed us). Most people spend the largest part of their lives trying to arrive at that place where they are accepted, wanted, included, or loved. The river that runs underneath all of our experiences (joy or sorrow) is our identity (who we really are), and whether or not we are being true to ourselves.

Faith is all about coming into our right minds and being aligned with the truth. When we truly understand who Jesus is (and therefore who we are in him), then we are congruent with the truth of all truths, and that produces a sort of heaven right here and now. If people live out of sync with the truth—if they don't know who they truly are—then that will begin to produce a certain kind of hell.



This will lead to a fruitless pursuit that ends up looking like a Death Cycle:



We hear the lies that say we are not accepted, not loved, of no value, lost and alone in the world. We begin to believe the lie, and we enter into a death cycle where we try to prove our self-sufficiency, but in reality we experience fear, doubt, anxiety, and broken relationships. We end up trying to create our own form of self-salvation in one religious form or another. In short, we are trying to get God's attention, but Jesus has already brought God's attention to us!

A Three-Fold Dimension of Faith

- Awakening
- Acknowledgement
- Alignment

We are all bound up in this relationship with the Trinity, and that will produce a stunning joy in us as we experience awakening, acknowledgement of all that God has done for us, and alignment with all that God says about who we are. Or it will produce sorrow and emptiness if we experience anything less than the glory of God. It is no light matter for our thinking to be in conflict with God's thinking! The human race can live in such a way that they contradict or violate the truth of their very being. Hell is all about the way we live outside the new reality that God has fashioned in Jesus. When we begin to think and function out of a center in Christ—when we think from the center that is the real world where the human race is bound up in a relationship with Jesus—it begins to help us share the good news, because there is a lot we already know about every single person we will ever meet.

1. We know before we ever meet someone that they are loved, claimed, named, and elected before the foundation of the world to be a part of the life of God.
2. We also know that we are all blind as bats and highly confused about our true selves, and most of us are trying to figure out through one way or the other how to become what we already are (in Jesus).
3. We also know the Holy Spirit has been given to disclose this to our insides. We are not alone. The Holy Spirit is at work educating people on the truth about themselves. So we know that everyone we meet is on the hunt. We are all searching for a home (because we have one; that is why we are lost), and that reality is constantly being communicated to us. Everyone we meet is deeply home sick. Everyone everywhere is looking for a solution to their life.

These are some of the stages that people may go through as they begin to come to an understanding of all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Notice that if all we are doing is helping someone clarify a misperception or to reconsider a reason they may have felt like they have rejected God, then we are doing the work of evangelism.

How we frame people in our minds will make all the difference in the world. We are called to reverence the image of God that is in each person.

