

JESUS OF NAZARETH
KINGDOM OF GOD PART 3: BOTH/AND REJECTION
MATTHEW 13:51-58
6-28-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light. We will continue to light the candle until we meet again.

Reflect

Rick Warren: Well actually I don't think it's a bunch of bad things that send us to hell. I think it is a rejection of God's grace.

Welcome

Good Morning! How are you doing this morning? Emotionally? Physically? Spiritually? Take a few moments to self-reflect and then pray that you'd be made more aware of God's grace and presence through the Holy Spirit in you. May you recognize and experience his presence with you now.

May the love and joy of the Father, the grace and peace of the Son and the courage and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ours in abundance!

Call to Worship: Isaiah 12:5-6

Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

You may not feel like singing or shouting this morning. You may feel tired and struggling with all the changes and hostility in our culture. That's okay. You can still worship by leaning into Jesus through faith and hope. That is, believing and trusting that Jesus of Nazareth is who he says he is, our Savior and Lord and that he has the final say in the divine drama that we find ourselves in; that he is sovereign and ultimately in control; that the kingdom of God is present but hidden and obscured by sin and darkness but will one day be made fully known; that we are saved in Christ by grace and deeply loved by our Creator; that despite the darkness in this world, there is also light.

Candle Lighting – Light the candle as a reminder that God is Light (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)!

Jesus is the Light. We are a light. Shine your light!

Psalm of Praise: Psalm 150

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!

Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Song: Holy Is The Lord -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOVGEYrWngo>

We stand and lift up our hands, for the joy of the Lord is our strength.



*We bow down and worship Him now, how great, how awesome is He?
And together we sing.*

*Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
The earth is filled with His glory.*

*We stand and lift up our hands, for the joy of the Lord is our strength.
We bow down and worship Him now, how great, how awesome is He?
And together we sing. Everyone sing.*

*Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
The earth is filled with His glory*

*It's rising up all around; it's the anthem of the Lord's renown.
It's rising up all around; it's the anthem of the Lord's renown.
And together we sing. Everyone sing.*

*Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the earth is filled with His glory.
The earth is filled with His glory.*

*Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, holy, holy
Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, holy, holy
Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, holy, holy*

Law: Psalm 19:7–9

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

The words “law”, “testimony”, “precepts”, “commandment”, “rules” all are similar and refer to what God wants us to do and be as human beings. Look at the words and phrases surrounding these words that describe what they can be like for us. What one stands out for you? Spend some time talking about its value and how it can positively impact your life.

Prayer: Based on 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Father God, we praise you for the confidence you give our hearts through the love of your Son. We look forward to the day when we will not pass from this world into condemnation, but instead will enter into your presence of everlasting celebration. Father, we confess that we are tired of living for ourselves. We thank you for sending Jesus to die in our place to deliver us from the misery of a self-centered life. No matter what struggles, temptations, or tragedies we face this week, please help us not to lose heart. Through the Holy Spirit, guard us from ever doubting your great love for us. Help us to remember the good news that you have made us your own and that you have forgiven our sins. Lead us to live our lives for Christ’s sake at our workplaces, with our friends and families, and wherever else we may go this week. We pray all this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen.



Song: Revelation Song -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsiDukXIeVY>

*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Holy, holy is He.
Sing a new song to Him who sits on heaven's mercy seat.
Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Holy, holy is He.
Sing a new song to Him who sits on heaven's mercy seat.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; who was and is and is to come.
With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings. You are my everything and I will adore You.
Clothed in rainbows of living color, flashes of lightning rolls of thunder.
Blessing and honor strength and glory and power be to You the only wise King.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; who was and is and is to come.
With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings. You are my everything and I will adore You.
Filled with wonder awestruck wonder at the mention of Your name.
Jesus Your name is power, breath and living water, such a marvelous mystery.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; who was and is and is to come.
With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings. You are my everything and I will adore You.*

Offering

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

(You can give by sending your offering to the church, P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361 or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.)

Youth Celebration

The presence and participation of our youth at CCRC is vital. We have mentioned that a lot. We have also mentioned that age appropriate teaching is important for their faith formation. They need to be able to understand the truth and grace and love of God in language that makes sense to them. The Ten Commandments are an important part of the Biblical teaching about how God wants us to live in relationship to him and others. It is kindergarten Christianity. When our youth get older, they will understand law and obedience all through the adult/mature lens of love. In light of that, here are the Ten Commandments for kids:

- We will worship God alone.**
- We will not make pretend gods or let anything take God's place.**
- We will use our words to praise and honor God.**
- We will save one day a week for rest and worship.**
- We will listen to our moms and dads and obey them.**
- We will not hate people or hurt others with our words and actions.**
- We will respect our bodies and the bodies of other people.**
- We will not take what doesn't belong to us.**
- We will tell the truth.**
- We will be thankful for God's good gifts to us.**

What ones do we as parents tend to teach well? Which ones not so much? Which ones do we need the most today? Why?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:51-58



Our passage this morning concludes the three-part series within a series on the Kingdom of Heaven. We have seen that the kingdom of heaven is a partially hidden kingdom today, clouded and darkened by sin and evil but will one day be revealed in all its glory when Jesus comes back again and removes all the sin and evil and darkness. We saw last week that the kingdom of heaven is supremely valuable because of Jesus and his reign and rule and that we are to go “all-in” in our participation as disciples of Jesus and not as fickle or distracted fans. This morning we will be looking at the last parable in this section and then the people’s reaction to Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth.

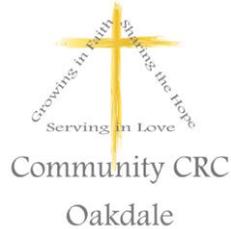
Please read Matthew 13:51-58

Gospel Message: Kingdom of God Part 3: Both/And Rejection

Peanut butter or chocolate. Peanut butter AND chocolate. Charlie Brown or Snoopy? Charlie Brown *and* Snoopy! Batman or Robin? Batman *and* Robin! Coffee or sunrise? Coffee and sunrise! Hot cocoa or marshmallows? Hot cocoa and marshmallows! Macaroni or cheese? Mac N Cheese! Bacon or eggs? Bacon and eggs! Chips or salsa? Chips and salsa! Some things are better together! Who likes to choose between two good things when you can have both! What do you like better together than separate?

Both/And ---- Either/Or. Listen closely to the next two questions? Do you enjoy both vanilla and chocolate ice-cream? Do you enjoy either vanilla or chocolate ice-cream? Did you notice the difference? One is restricting and limiting. One forces you into a potential false dichotomy, a false contrast, opposition or contradiction, (the either/or question). If you like both, then its difficult to answer the either/or question straight on. The same thing holds true for a statement of fact. Both $3 + 3$ and $2 \times 3 = 6$. Either $3 + 3$ or $2 \times 3 = 6$. In this case, the both/and is the only true statement. The either/or is a false statement because it creates a false dichotomy. The reverse of this is true also: Granite rock is both a stone and water. Granite rock is either a stone or water. The first both/and cannot be true as granite is a stone and it is not water. The either/or makes this fact plain. So why is this important? There are many truths in scripture that are either/or truths and there are many truths in scripture that are both/and truths. If a truth is supposed to be a both/and truth and we make it an either/or truth, we will have it reduced and/or wrong. Therefore, being able to know which is which is vital to a truthful understanding of the Bible and therefore a truer experience of being a disciple of Jesus. In fact, in some cases it distinguishes a disciple from one who is not. Thus, both/and truth is an essential and important part of biblical truth.

In our passage today, Jesus uses a parable about an owner of a house who takes out both his old and new treasures together. Jesus says this is what a “scribe who is trained for the kingdom of heaven is like.” A scribe was one who was an expert in the Hebrew scriptures, which we know as the “old” testament. What Jesus is getting at here is that now, the Scribe who is trained for the kingdom of heaven will have both an “old” and a “new” treasure to take out or to learn and teach. The new, of course, is Jesus Christ and his kingdom reign and rule – the gospel news. An important point here that utilizes the both/and, either/or thinking is that this “old” and “new” are not in relationship with each other by the either/or understanding but by the both/an understanding. It is not either the old or the new but both the old and the new. This is important. Remember that Jesus said he had not come to “abolish the law and the prophets (old) but to fulfill them. The new (Jesus Christ) is not a replacement of the old (law) but the fulfillment of it. Thus, the Old Testament remains vital for us pastors and teachers to preach and teach from and for disciples of Jesus to know and understand to deepen their



faith, hope and love.

The Old Testament has always been an “easy target” for opponents and critics of Christianity. It can come across as barbaric, outdated, racist and violent. Yet, this is old news. However, it did lead Pastor Andy Stanley to infamously suggest that it might be a good idea to “unhitch” the Old Testament from our theology (he later clarified and mostly cleared up what he meant – in a good way, although he left many feeling like he didn’t go far enough to embrace the importance of the Old Testament).

Christianity Today did a five-part series on the importance of the Old Testament from January, 2020 to June, 2020. The following is a summary of that series and a description of five reasons the Old Testament is a “treasure” that needs, indeed must come out with the new and not be “unhitched” from our theology. These five reasons are (1) the Old Testament is vital to our understanding of the New Testament (and it is indispensable in itself); (2) the perceptions of an angry, Old Testament God is a distortion; (3) The Old Testament is a surprising source of support in our struggles with stress; (4) the old Testament doesn’t contradict New Testament ethics but clarifies them; (5) the Old Testament places internal struggles on “full display” and teach us a lot about discipleship.

First, the OT (Old Testament) is vital to our understanding of the NT (New Testament). St. Augustine once quipped that “In the Old testament the New lies concealed, in the New Testament the Old is revealed.” He is right. However, many throughout history, including today struggle or outright deny this. Marcion from the second century denied that the Old Testament offered us anything of importance and was promptly excommunicated as a heretic. The Nazis did the same thing and essentially eliminated the OT from faith with disastrous consequences (not that by any means was the sole reason for the holocaust). And today there are a significant number who struggle with finding any value in reading the OT. So, author Brent Strawn offers 4 unique (or largely emphasized) “gifts” that the OT offers us today (and I’ll add a fifth). (1) Honesty. The OT is brutally candid. Think of the imprecatory Psalms that wish violent harm to his enemies or the story of Tamar or the explicit sexual language of the book, Song of Solomon. They are there because of honesty; honesty to sin, sexuality and suffering. They reveal the often-brutal reality of living in a sinful, evil filled world. (2) Poetry. Roughly a third of the OT is poetic in form (can you name the books that are poetry or mostly poetry?). Poetry offers “daring imagery” that Garrison Keillor says, “offer a truer account than what we’re used to getting.” (3) Theology or “speech about God.” God is mentioned over three thousand times in the OT. We derive much of our doctrine (truthful biblical statements) of God (the Father) from the OT. (4) God’s People. The roots of being the church are found in the OT. We learn a significant amount about what it means to be the people of God from the stories and events of the OT. More specifically for today’s highly individualistic culture, the corporate nature of being the people of God. (5) Christology. We learn everything about who and what the Messiah was to like from the OT. It is clear the Pharisees dropped the ball on this one as they could not recognize Jesus as the Messiah because they forgot or overlooked the passages that didn’t quite fit with what they wanted the Messiah to be.

Second, the OT perception of an angry God is a distortion (and Jesus is much harsher in the NT than most like to let on). The OT overflows with verses like this describing God (theology): The Lord, The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining live to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin [Exodus 34:6]. Yes, God gets angry like a parent gets angry with a child they love but to portray God as only a God of wrath is to massively miss the God of the OT. God is portrayed as a God of love, compassion, mercy, patience,



kindness and forgiveness extensively throughout the OT and to miss that is tantamount to selective reading and seeing. Robert L. Foster, in his essay emphasizes God's "motherly Compassion" in the OT. He puts a theological spin on the word compassion from Exodus 34:6 as it also refers to the womb, giving the translation above, motherly compassion." The motherly compassion of God is explicitly mentioned 150 times in the OT. Instead of picturing God just as an angry old man, the OT paints a picture of God as a compassionate mother who gets angry at her persistently rebellious and disobedient children.

Third, the OT is a great source of support for dealing with stress and anxiety. We live in times of increasing stress and anxiety. The OT has a significant amount of resources to offer. B.G. White, a millennial that struggles with anxiety writes, "as others buy a casket and recite a eulogy for the [OT], I find them bounding with life." His recovery was rooted in the OT text from Isaiah 41:10 that says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Because of the brutal honesty of the OT, there is much shown that we might become fearful over, lament over, become anxious over in life. There is a plethora of traumatic events. Because of this, there is much to which God and his prophetic writers wrote for guidance and comfort and support amidst it. There were no mental health clinics to go to in the OT. There were no support groups or an array of drugs to be employed when necessary. The OT is "saturated" in "do not fear" texts that distill wisdom that has stood the test of time. Often the very texts that describe the brutal realities in life that can create stress and anxiety go on to offer hope and encouragement. "The Lord is with me, I will not be afraid" (Psalm 118:6). Furthermore, the OT often moves us from comfort to command; to live the promises and experience the reality they offer and not just learn about it. Martin Luther, a most notorious anxiety struggler often commented that anxiety is all that Satan can do to us now, for the Lord is "a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe (Proverbs 18:10). The OT is filled with characters in the divine drama who face fear and anxiety and it contains many stories of broken people battling anxiety and stress with the truths and presence of the motherly compassion of a loving God.

Fourth, the NT clarifies OT ethics, not contradict them. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that the scriptures are profitable for teaching, reproof, correcting and training in righteousness. What scriptures? The NT was in the process of being written so this passage is referring to the OT. Furthermore, it is in the OT that we find most of the laws that God gives his people to live by including the Ten Commandments. While some of these are culturally bound and no longer apply, and others are bound up in Christ and done away with his life, death and resurrection, still other are relevant and helpful for understanding God's will for us today. When Jesus says that he did not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them, he meant that he was both explaining and expanding them to a deeper more mature level. It's almost as if the law in the OT is like teaching children what to do and not to do before they are able to understand why. When they get older, they will need a fuller explanation of why they do or don't do certain things. Jesus's deeper explanation comes out of the OT root of love. Love explains law and it fulfills law. The law and our breaking of it also explains the need for forgiveness and payment and reconciliation. We ultimately see this as the gospel of Jesus Christ but it is grounded in the OT picture of love and the sacrificial system of forgiveness.

Fifth, the OT places internal struggles on full display, teaching us a lot about discipleship. The full range of feelings and thoughts that the OT characters are portrayed with show us ourselves and the



disciplines that are helpful for flourishing as God's people. Ruth Haley Barton, offer three such practices prevalent in the OT that help shape us as disciples of Jesus today. (1) Prayer. The OT is filled with prayer. The Psalms are prayers that are sung and are an important place to go to learn to pray through and from the array of feelings and thoughts we regularly deal with. The Psalms were Jesus' and the disciple's prayer book that helped shape them. There are all kinds of prayers found there: personal and corporate prayers, prayers of lament, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, prayers of confession, prayers of anger, prayers that are spontaneous and prayers that are forms of liturgy. (2) Solitude and Silence. These two practices go hand in hand. The practice of solitude and silence is found in the story of Elijah (amongst others) in 1 Kings 18. It is raw and it is human. And then there is Moses and his long history of leading God's people. How did he do this? Well, solitude and silence with God played a major role. (3) Showing before telling. It seems as you read the OT that there is much more description of what the people did than what they said. All the main characters are displayed more by what they did than what they said. Their personal internal experiences of God are externalized and made visible for all to see. We can learn to recognize and respond to God from their experiences. Of course, all of this is seen not separate from but continuous with the NT and the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, this continuity, this both/and is a large target for rejection.

This is exactly where Matthew goes next. Jesus is rejected because of the tension he creates between their expectations of him and who he really is. Matthew shares a story about Jesus heading back to his hometown of Nazareth. It is a homecoming for him. Remember, Nazareth was a small town, maybe 1-2 thousand people at the most. He would have lived there for 25 plus years, working as a *teknon*, a contractor, someone who works with wood and stone just like his dad Joseph. He would have been well known by most people and he would have known most people of Nazareth. The synagogue, which wasn't a religious gathering place but rather the central gathering place of the town, much like the Bianchi community center, would have been very familiar to him. It is there where he "taught them." But they were incredulous. They doubted and questioned and pushed back, "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?" And they took offense at him. The Greek word "offense" is "*skandalizo*." Sound like an English word you know? Yep. Scandal. Scandalous. Jesus was scandalous to them. Scandalous means to be "disgracefully bad because of someone's negligence of irresponsibility"; it is to cause "public outrage by a perceived offense against morality or law." This is how they perceived Jesus of Nazareth, the one they grew up with, went to school with, worked with, laughed with, cried with, argued with, disagreed with. He was a scandal and an offense.

Why did they see him as scandalous, as an offense? Why did Jesus of Nazareth offend them? (See, there was an offended culture back in Jesus' day too – there is nothing new under the sun!) They were offended because they could not understand or figure out how the Jesus of Nazareth that they knew, came to "get all these things." What things? "Wisdom and mighty works." Remember what we taught two weeks ago. Jesus was unimpressive. That is what the Old Testament tells us about him (see, we need the Old Testament!). Isaiah 53, which the Jewish people seem to have ignored or disagreed with or forgot about says that "he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him." Woe! Unpack that some. No form. No majesty. No beauty. No one would have cause to look at him. That is, he did not stand out; he was not the star athlete or star actor or star musician but was unimpressive, average, plain, sit on the bench as back up, background actor, last chair musician. No one desired him (yes, that is in marital kind of overtones). He was not the attractive,



Fabio looking, white American image we see everywhere in America. If any of you think you fit this description of being average and plain, you are in good company!

So, his family and friends and acquaintances are like, “what happened to him?” How did unimpressive Jesus of Nazareth become famous and well known for his wisdom and mighty works? Doesn’t he know that “nothing good comes out of Nazareth (John 1:46)? How did Clark Kent become Superman! Well, he didn’t. He always was. Miraculously, Jesus of Nazareth kept a low profile for 30 years. Think of the humility, self-control and perseverance this would take. Imagine being Jesus of Nazareth and keeping a low profile for 30 years. Think of your interactions and experiences at home, at school, at work, in the city in which it would have been very nice and convenient to show that you are Superman; that you are the one who created them; that you are the one who created the entire universe, sun, moon, planets, stars galaxies; that you are the one who is saving the universe; that you are the one who will be judging the living and the dead; that you are the one that they will bend their knee to. How about the times you were treated unfairly, unjustly, when others took advantage of you, used you, lied to you, mistreated you? Yep, I would have busted out Superman on many, many occasions (and sinned in the process). But not Jesus, he maintained his low status up to and even into and through his revelation as the long awaited for, albeit suffering servant, Messiah. This is stunning. The ordinary, low-profile life of Jesus going about daily life like the rest of us with one very major exception – he never sinned. Because no one really paid any attention to Jesus, his perfection goes unnoticed. Or maybe they noticed but categorized and labeled and stereotyped as a weirdo and nerd and relegated him even further to the margins of the social pecking order.

So why were they incredulous and rejecting of Jesus? Because they had him pegged as a nobody. They had him figured out already and had him in their nice and neat, stereotypical and closed off box in which there was no room or place for Jesus the Messiah to fit. This is what overgeneralizations, stereotypes, labels and typecasts will do. All this kind of people are this. All that kind of people are that. Jesus is either unimpressive or he is impressive. We labeled him unimpressive. Therefore, with either/or thinking, he cannot be impressive. Yet Jesus is both unimpressive and impressive. Both/and thinking allows for this. It allows for the tension that will strain and stretch our faith. Both/and thinking is vitally important to being a disciple of Jesus of Christ. There are many doctrines (ways of understanding) of Biblical truth about who God is, who we are, what is wrong, how do we overcome and where is this all heading that must be attended to with both/and thinking. If held with any kind of either/or thinking, will become heresy, false understanding, false belief and false imaging of God. Can you think of some?

How about Jesus himself? He is both fully divine (100%) and fully human (100%). The math does not add up yet that is what the Bible teaches. There is mystery and faith needed. If one goes the either/or route of thinking, stereotyping or labeling Jesus as only human or only divine you end up with the heresies of Arianism and Docetism respectively. Each were vehemently condemned by the early councils as antithetical to orthodox Christian belief and upheld by the creeds (Apostle’s, Nicene and Athanasian) and Confessions (Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort and Heidelberg Catechism). Error either way will effectively cancel the redemptive ability of Jesus of Nazareth as he needs to be both fully human and fully divine to accomplish biblical salvation for us. So, Jesus is both two natures and one person. Another is the Trinity. God is both three persons and one being. How about salvation? Salvation is both justification and sanctification (and glorification). How about discipleship? It is both



Good News and good works (good works of faith follow the good news of salvation otherwise it is “dead” – James 2). How about marriage? Marriage is both male and female not either male or female. How about love? We are called to both love God and love our neighbor and not either love God or love our neighbor (as if one of those were optional, usually the neighbor portion – 1, 2, 3 John focus on this). How about the kingdom of heaven? Scripture plainly teaches that the kingdom of heaven is both already here and not yet here (already and not yet). It is not the false dichotomy of either here or not here. What about our salvation from a time perspective? We are both saved, are being saved and will be saved (Ephesians 2:5; Philippians 2:12 and 1 Peter 1:8-9 respectively.) It is not either I am saved or I am being saved or I will be saved. It is all three. How about redemption? It has both present and future dimensions. We are both redeemed and will be redeemed (Ephesians 1:7 and Ephesians 4:30 respectively). It is not either we are redeemed or we will be redeemed. Again, this is an unbiblical and false dichotomy. There are more but these suffice to demonstrate the discipleship importance of the both/and approach to appropriate doctrines of faith.

The value of the both/and is that it creates and encourages us to live within the faith deepening and God glorifying tension of holy truth. It embraces the mystery of sacred life and invites us into the voluminous halls of its perspective. Scripture is too supernatural to leave us comfortable with our natural tendencies of reducing scriptural truths to human comprehension. We are given enough, and more to apprehend biblical truths but not fully comprehend them. Apprehend means to understand and grasp in partiality while comprehend means to understand and grasp in totality. Now is apprehension. In the life to come, comprehension (1 Corinthians 13:12). Now we see through a glass darkly but in the age to come we will see clearly. **Jesus of Nazareth is not to be confined to a pre-determined and comfortable, stereotypical box.** His is divine. He is perfect humanity. He is resurrected humanity. His is God. He is omniscient. He is omnipotent. He is omnipresent. He is Creator. He is sovereign. He is King. He is Judge. He is Eternal. He is mortal. He is flesh and bone. He is male! He is Jewish. He is Emmanuel. The good news is that Jesus is both our Savior and our Lord. He is both the one who rescues us and who reigns over us. He is the one who both liberates us and who leads us.

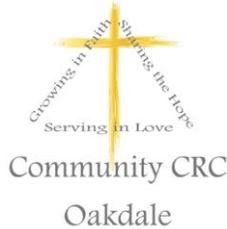
May we not reject Jesus of Nazareth, the biblical Jesus because of false information or challenging truths or uncomfortable realities. May we, by the Holy Spirit in us, continue to grow in faithful discipleship to Jesus of Nazareth. May we recognize and remove false thinking. May we confess and repent of unbelief. May we enlarge and expand our knowledge and understanding and experience of Jesus of Nazareth. May we grow in the hope that we have in Christ, seeking to practice the good works of faith that give evidence to the salvation we have in Christ through the good news of his redemptive work and the inbreaking of his kingdom reign and rule. May we not unhitch any biblical truth or portion of scripture but instead to seek to move further up and further into seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The people of Nazareth knew about Jesus but they couldn't see past their self-imposed limited understanding to really know the true Jesus of Nazareth. May we not make the same mistake.

Prayer: Heavenly Father

What things must you let go or reprioritize to be all in for Jesus and his kingdom reign and rule?

Communion Meditation

Professing: (Apostles Creed)



**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Proclaiming: 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25 (Paraphrased)

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, “this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” After the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, “this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins.”

Remember and believe the body and blood of Jesus was given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Song: Be Thou My Vision -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm7IF16s>

*Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night.
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.
Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son.
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.
Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise.
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always.
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart.
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.
High King of Heaven, my victory won.
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'n's Sun.
Heart of my own heart, whate'er befall.
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.*

Sending as Disciples of Jesus: Matthew 28:18-20 (Paraphrased)

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore, as we are sent into the world by him, let us make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. And let us remember and treasure that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age. Amen!