

2019 FALL SEMESTER

NEW TESTAMENT 11: PAULINE EPISTLES
OLD TESTAMENT 11: HISTORICAL BOOKS
PREACHING 1
SPIRITUAL FORMATION 1
MODERN CHURCH HISTORY

Visit WWW.RYLESEMINARY.CA to register!

RYLE
SEMINARY

Celebrate With Us!

Come join us in celebrating and honoring all of those who serve in our church family!

DESSERTS
&
OPPORTUNITIES TO
SIGN-UP FOR SERVING IN THE FUTURE!

SEPTEMBER 15

MESSIAH OFFICE | 315 LISGAR ST. OTTAWA ON, K2P0E1
SUNDAY SERVICE | OTTAWA LITTLE THEATRE, 400 KING EDWARD AVE. OTTAWA, ON



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH

Welcome!

Real Jesus
REAL MIRACLES

AUGUST 25, 2019

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS GRIPPED BY THE GOSPEL,
LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY.

DE-CONVERSION PART 1

Dear Friends,

There has been lots of talk about "de-conversion" over the last month or so. Joshua Harris was a mega-church Pastor and a best-selling evangelical author. He recently announced that his marriage of 20+ years had come to an end. Shortly after this, he announced that he had left the Christian faith. He has "de-converted". His story has sparked lots of comment in the evangelical, "liberal", and secular media. I will add my two-cents.

I have been a Christian for a long time (almost 50 years). I have been a pastor for 38 years. Over the years, I have had many friends leave the faith. There have been people who were an important part of Messiah who have left the faith. I confess that some of the departures shook me. As I prayed and thought about the issue, I realized that Jesus talked about "de-conversion". This is not something that catches Him by surprise. I was led to meditate upon the Parable of the Sower. This parable is so important, that it is one of the few parables that is recorded in three different Gospels - Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15.

In this parable, Jesus provides a taxonomy of three broad classes of reasons why people who play a role - sometimes a significant role - in the visible church, come to walk away from the visible Christian community. In every case, the word of God, or the word of the kingdom, or the Word comes from God, through His servants, to people. In other words, people hear of the Biblical Jesus in the context of the Gospel and the whole counsel of God. In some cases, this message enters into a person and bears fruit for eternal life and the glory of God.

But, for some people, the message is heard, but there is no true understanding and no saving belief/faith. They might be part of the visible church, the Christian community, for a very short period or a long period, but the reality is they are described as seed falling on the path.

Some people hear the message and are part of the visible church, maybe even having leadership positions. They "understand" the word. However, the word has not entered into them to bear fruit for eternal life and the glory of God.

(Continued on next page)

So when membership in the visible church has a cost because of tribulation, persecution, or testing, then person departs from the visible church community. They are the seed in shallow soil. In Canada today, to be an "out" Christian requires courage. The whole counsel of God and the Gospel are antithetical to much that is valued by the leading cultural influences, and by the culture in general. This opposition is "testing" and it is daily and in your face. It can be far easier just to leave the visible Christian community.

Finally, some people understand the word and become a part of the visible church. They can be in leadership and/or play a significant role in the visible Christian community. Frankly, they don't really care about the cultural pressures that test others. However, they desire other things, maybe good in themselves, but they devote themselves to these things the world values highly and before they know it, they find the visible church boring or inconvenient or not relevant. Their pursuit of money or promotion leave less and less time for the visible Christian community. Even more powerful today are kids sports. More people have left the visible church because of minor hockey or ringette then because of all the new atheists combined. The seeds among the thorns also includes those who leave the visible church because they want guilt-free sex outside of marriage or to pursue something else that the bible says is wrong.

Jesus is not being reductionistic or belittling in this parable. He is giving us both a 20,000 foot understanding and also a deep understanding of what each heart is like before God. And Jesus did not tell us this parable to make us proud. He spoke it to warn us and humble us, that we will call out to Him - Lord, by Your grace make me good soil where Your word comes in and bears much fruit for eternal life and Your glory!

George+

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I NEED TO DEVELOP GODLY ATTITUDES.

- A) Pray for godly attitudes in general & certain attitudes in particular.
- B) Ask others to pray the same thing for you.
- C) Repeat the attitude to help it sink in. Do this in conjunction with A & B!

ATTITUDES.

1. If I claim I have not sinned, I am only fooling myself and not living in the truth. (Paraphrased from 1 John 1:8)
2. If I claim I have not sinned, I am calling God a liar, and showing that His word has no place in my heart. (Paraphrased from 1 John 1:10)
3. I do not need to forgive myself. I need to know more deeply the only real forgiveness, which comes from Jesus.

I NEED TO GROW IN PRAYER.

A great way to do this is to learn to pray the Bible. Pray this prayer until you can pray without reading:

Lord, have mercy upon me and deliver me from self-deception. Help me to walk in the truth - You are true and Your word written is true. Help me to be quick to obey the truth and steadfast in trusting You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

I NEED TO GET GOD'S WORD IN MY MIND AND HEART.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.."

1 John 1:8-10

I NEED TO DO SOMETHING OR START TO DO SOMETHING.

Complete the following sentence: "In light of God's word, the Holy Spirit is leading me to _____."

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