

Shawn Brummund: Good morning and welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath School Study Hour" on this beautiful last day of October, here in 2020. It's nice to be able to have you here in the studio of Amazing Facts as we come together to be able to continue to study this very important subject of education. In this particular instance, it is, of course, Christian education as revealed in the Bible and, of course, the number-one textbook that we have for Christian education is the Holy Bible itself. And so, thank you for joining us.

Those who are local, I know that many are joining us because of the pandemic, even locally here in Granite Bay, Roseville-Sacramento area. As well, of course, we have our online friends, members across the United States, and many people that are tuning in from around the world. So, for those of you who are livestreaming, happy Sabbath. To those of you who are watching this in the future, perhaps throughout the week preparing for the Sabbath, I want to wish you a special blessing throughout your week, as well.

My name is Pastor Shawn Brummund, and our pastor that will be teaching today is Pastor Lucas, Luccas Rodor, and so we're going to invite him up shortly. But before we invite him up, we want to continue to offer our free offer as we do every single week, and this particular offer is a Bible study guide entitled "Saved from Certain Death." And if you'd like to receive a copy of this particular free offer, you can dial into 1-866-788-3966, and they will be happy to be able to offer this to you and send it out for free if you are in the United States.

Now, that is offer number 109. If you prefer a digital copy, that also is available for you. Want to encourage you to take advantage of that by texting the code SH060, and you want to text that to the number 40544. And so, again, "Saved from Certain Death," and this is important Bible subject that I know that you will be blessed with as you continue your Christian education, even as we will be over the next hour here as well.

So, we want to give as much time as possible to our teaching pastor, so I want to invite you to join me in prayer.

Father in heaven, we thank You for the opportunity to be able to worship You here this morning. We want to thank You so much, Lord, for giving us this opportunity to be able to open Your Bible. We thank You for the subject that You have revealed to us in the Bible of Christian education, even as You, Lord Jesus, had commanded Your church and the first leaders of Your church to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things in which You have commanded them. And so, Lord, we continue to be Your students, want to pray, God in heaven, that You will be our teacher, even as You, Lord Jesus, were our teacher here on Earth. That You'll continue to guide us into all truth even as You send Your Spirit. Be with our teacher. Be with our pastor today as he brings the Word of Life to each and every one of us, and so we pray these things in Jesus's name. Amen.

So again, thank you for joining us. Pastor Rodor.

Luccas Rodor: Happy Sabbath, friends. It is so good to be here with you. It's so good to be able to share this lesson with all of you. I know that we have people that are just watching from all over, really, and it's a privilege to be here. We're having a beautiful day here in the--in Granite Bay, in the proximity of Sacramento, in California. We're having a gorgeous day. I was just in Maryland this last week with my parents. I was visiting them and out there it was, kind of, rainy, kind of--you know, we--you could tell it was fall. Out here you can also tell, but here we have the sunshine, so that's always a pleasure.

The study of this--of today's lesson is really an interesting one. Honestly, I'm really happy that I got to do this one, because it's about education and redemption, and, really, I feel that this is one of the core messages of this quarter, which is where we understand that education, true education, has a redemptive purpose. It's there for the sole reason of redemption. Any education, Christian education that doesn't have in its sight, in its target, in its focus redemption, there's something wrong with that kind of education.

I'm going to start reading the memory text with you all. This memory text, it's one of the famous 3:16s of the Bible. You know that the most famous, one of the most famous, at least, verses in the Bible is John 3:16, but there are quite a few other important 3:16s in the Bible, and this is one of them. And so, this one comes from 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, and it says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Now, friends, one thing that I find extremely important to understand before we actually begin and dive deep into the content of this lesson is the understanding about God, His creation, the world around us. When it comes to understanding Him, when it comes to understanding the world, when it comes to understanding His creative capacity and His creativity, there are basically three different forms or three different types of revelation that we find, three different, as Pastor Shawn put it, textbooks that really explain who God is, that explain His personality, His character.

The word "revelation" actually comes from two Latin root words, which are the words "re" and "velo" that literally mean together. When you combine them, revelation, they literally mean "the removal of the veil." And, of course, they come--that is also a transliteration from the Greek "apokalypsis," which is, again, two root words. If you've ever heard the word "apocalypse" before, that's where it comes from, is these two root word. That is, "apó" and "kalypsis" that literally mean "the removal of the veil." So, through it, through this revelation, through this removal of the veil, God, He opens the curtains to fix the problem that sin created in the very beginning, in the communication between heaven and between Earth.

We know that sin, when it came around, it destroyed the best part of our communication with heaven, and so God's revelation comes to fix that problem between God and humans, communication between God and us. You see, sin affected our capacity of seeing correctly, of thinking correctly, of acting correctly, of feeling correctly. Sin was this great divide here on planet Earth, so what God decided to do to bridge that problem was to communicate, was to reveal Himself through these three types, these three textbooks of revelation, and we're going to quickly cover them so that we can better understand what this lesson has for us. So, first of all, we know that God reveals Himself through the textbook of nature. That's the first textbook, using Eden, the laws that govern the universe, the laws of physics, of chemistry, of algebra, of geometry, of biology. When we see the tree, the skies, the air, we see how they interact with each other. We see the laws of thermodynamics and gravity.

That is God exercising His creativity. That is God exercising His creative power. And, honestly, one thing that I truly love about the textbook of creation is that when God exercises His creative power, we see not only His power, but we see His good sense of humor. We see that God is a creative God. I mean, God--this is the being that created creatures such as the duck-billed platypus. Who could have thought of creating an animal like that except a creative, good-humored God? So, I just love understanding and studying the textbook of nature. I'm fascinated by it.

I am not good at physics or chemistry. You could just ask my high school teachers. They would be the first to tell you that they don't know how I passed all those years, but I do have a deep appreciation for those areas of knowledge and those areas of existence. However, all that being said, while nature, if understood correctly, does bear witness to the Creator God and His footprint here in our world, the entrance of sin did make this textbook, the textbook of nature, incomplete, because it can lead to divergent and even defective conclusions, depending on the perspective by which nature is interpreted.

So, for example, those who believe in the theory or the faith of evolution, for example, they say that they base their conclusions on the empirical study of nature. And so, we understand that this textbook, it can and it is to a great extent quite subjective depending on how one is interpreting it. Even in Eden, within the limits of original perfection, nature was not absolute or complete revelation. Even then it needed to be complemented by special revelation, and we know this, for example--point in case of this is that the Bible tells us that Jesus, He would visit our first parents. He would walk with them in the evenings before sin. And what would they be doing? They would be talking. They would be communicating. He would be teaching them and instructing them, so even the textbook of nature was made to be understood as time goes by and learned as time goes by. And it is best interpreted by special revelation, which is the very next textbook.

Before I get there, the last thing I'd like to say about natural revelation in the context of the Eden, another example of how natural revelation is not complete is the forbidden tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For example, it wasn't defined by nature. Naturally, there was no way to know that that tree was in any way different or special, unless God revealed it, so what makes that tree different is the fact that God told them not to eat of it. Naturally, there was nothing identifying it as anything different. Special revelation had to come in from God so that they could understand what they were supposed to do.

So, you see that natural revelation, it reveals the character of God. It reveals the personality of God. It reveals that He is a creator. It reveals certain aspects, certain communicable attributes of who He is, but at the same time it is not complete, especially with the entrance of sin in our world. And so, this is how we understand the second great textbook of God's revelation, which is the Bible. It's Holy Scripture, and it's called special revelation. And here we have to understand two very basic theological concepts before we actually dive into the main part of this week's lesson.

The first is, what is special revelation? What is it? What does it do? Why is it special revelation? So, it is when God communicates that which could never be understood or learned by fallen humans through any of our methods. There's no way that we could learn this revelation through induction, through a logical deduction, through empirical study unless God had communicated it. So, basically, special revelation is what we could never know unless God had told us, right? It's what we could never understand, could never grasp unless God had communicated it to us, so this special revelation was done through the prophets. This is what we find in the Bible, those who spoke through or then spoke for God, and it was then condensed in a book called The Bible, which literally comes from a Greek word "biblos," which, again, literally means "book." That's what Bible means. It literally means "book." Biblos. So, its purpose, according to our memory verse today in Timothy 3:16, is primarily educational.

The purpose of the Bible is educational, friends. That's why it's so important that this quarter we're studying education. We're studying this concept that education goes way beyond classrooms and teachers and diplomas and degrees, and then preparation for future jobs and salaries. Ultimately, revelation has a redemptive purpose, so that's what we find here.

Primarily, the purpose of the Bible is to instruct in doctrine, to correct, to reproof, to discipline, to become instructed in righteousness, to become apt for salvation by the work of the Holy Spirit of God, the great interpreter of Scripture. And that's how we understand Scripture and the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us to interpret Scripture.

The second concept--so, the first one is direct revelation, where God reveals to the prophet. The second idea that we have to understand here is the concept of inspiration. So, what is inspiration? What's the difference between inspiration and revelation? Well, first of all, not only did God make His plans, His wisdom, His purposes, His paths available to us through revelation, but He guaranteed that the content of that revelation was faithfully communicated through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

So, inspiration, friends, in a nutshell, it guarantees that the Scriptures, which were inspired by the Spirit of God--and that's the literal meaning of inspiration. Inspiration comes from that literal meaning. It means that it was communicated precisely as God wanted it to be communicated. And moreover, more than just revelation and inspiration, we also know that there's a word mentioned in theology called "illumination."

Now, illumination has nothing to do with, you know, the post-medieval moment of illumination and renaissance. Has nothing to do with that. In this sense, illumination is the phenomenon that occurs within the believer that studies the Word in order for the author to communicate the correct meaning of the text, so this is something--illumination is when God illuminates. That's why we say that God is--you know, that God's Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. This is what it means. He illuminates us so that we can understand the correct meaning of what the author was trying to convey or to pass, so this way, friends.

Revelation is the phenomenon by which God communicates knowledge that we could never acquire through any other source. Inspiration is the phenomenon by which God guarantees that that which is revealed or that that was revealed is faithfully communicated by a prophet in a reliable manner. And inspiration occurs in the believer

through the Holy Spirit of God, or capacitating them to correctly understand what was transmitted by the author. And so, this way, friends, we understand that the Bible does not--the Bible does not contain or reflect human knowledge, human philosophy, human ideologies. No, the Bible reveals the mind of God. That is the purpose of the Bible. The Bible reveals the mind of God, the very mind of God.

Another important aspect about special revelation is that it comes through Jesus. It comes through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. So, in special revelation in Scripture we have the written Word, but the third and most glorious textbook that we have of revelation is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. The clearest, the most perfect, the most glorious revelation from God came through His son. And so, we have these three textbooks of revelation.

We have natural revelation, we have special revelation, and then another sort of special revelation we have through Jesus Christ, the absolute revelation of God to us. Jesus Himself said in John chapter 17, verse 3, he says, "And this is the eternal life, that we may know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." And so, this is how we understand revelation.

The progression of this week's lesson is very interesting, and one of the main topics that are covered there is how we understand that we were created in the image of God. Now, the first lesson of Scripture or one of the first lessons of Scripture is that humankind was created. We were created. We did not just pop into existence. We were intelligently, literally purposefully, created. We were made, so we are a creation of God. Not only this, but we were created in His image and in His likeness.

This is one of the first and most important lessons that we find in Scripture. And what this means is that even though throughout history there have been many theologians and many interpreters that understood this declaration that we were created in God's image in different ways, there are a few very basic principles that we can understand and can all agree about this. So, basically, being created in the image and in the likeness of God, ultimately what it means is that we are like God in certain aspects, and God is like us in certain aspects. So, this expression, likeness and image, it indicates that there are elements inside of humans, inside of us, that bear witness to our origin. There are elements inside of us--I'm going to repeat it--that bear witness to our origin, to our Creator and to how we were created.

Even after the Fall, in some aspects, humans still reflect these indicative attributes of their origin, so, friends, true education focuses precisely on the contact points, on the contact points between God and His creation. What is similar? How were we created in His likeness? Now, unfortunately, we know that sin did obscure, distort, and even mutilate the image of God inside of humanity, but what was left is still the object of God's divine action. And so, the process of education, it converges with redemption. The process of education converges with redemption because it restores in humanity what was lost in the Fall, what was lost by sin, so God conceded to humans that way His communicable attributes.

Everything that makes us different from the animals, God communicated that to us. We are relational creatures. We have sentience. We think. We can reason much more than unrational animals. And so, because of all these qualities and so much more, the fact that we were given authority, the fact that we were given domain, the fact that the Son of God came to die to give Himself for us, all of this--in all of this we understand that we are--we were created in His likeness and in His image.

One of the things that most surprised me positively and made me truly enjoy this past week's lesson was the study on Jesus as the master teacher, Jesus as the teacher, as rabbi. You know, out of all the titles of God, of all of the titles attributed to Jesus Christ during His incarnation, one stands out. One attribute stands out, which is the one of teacher. So many times we find Jesus being called Rabbi or Master or Lord and what's interesting is that Jesus approved this. He never denied it. He never rebuked people who called Him Teacher or Rabbi or Master. In fact, in John 13:13 He says, "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am." And here we find, again, another little moment where Jesus--He says, "I am," right? And this is the ego eimi of Greek. I am. This is who he is. This is the--that self-existence portrayed here in Jesus Christ. So, Jesus, he never went against people calling Him rabbi or teacher.

Some of His main lessons as a rabbi that we learn in the New Testament, that truly reflect the personality of God, that truly reflect Jesus's purpose here more than anything, which was to reveal the person of God, the person of the Father. In Jesus's substitution for us, He was revealing who God is. In His example to us, his life of example, he was revealing God to us, and so we find that some of His main lessons when it comes to revealing God, when it comes to being our Redeemer and our Savior, and when it comes to being our example are, for example, that Jesus, He came to reveal God just as He is.

Jesus came to reveal God just as He is, not as some sort of contorted Santa Claus that appears once a year to bring down gifts, not as some sort of cosmic policeman just waiting behind the bush to see if someone is speeding and to give them a ticket, not as some severe divine judge just waiting to condemn people. No, Jesus depicted God as Father, as a loving, caring, intimate Father, revealed in the word "Abba," which better translates as papa. That is the God that Jesus came to reveal, and that is one of His main lessons.

He also taught us not only who God is, but he taught us who we are, who we as humans are. We are not orphans of some insensitive, chaotic, uncaring, impersonal existence, not some evolved amoeba, but a creature of God. And in that way each individual person is important. Each individual has an eternal destiny at their disposal, available to them. Jesus taught personal value of each person. He described and taught the meaning, the horror, the severity of sin with an incredible realism. Jesus taught that not only is sin horrible and bad, but He showed us how great of an optimist God is.

Our God, friends, is an incredible optimist that never lost hope in human possibilities in God. He never lost hope of what we can become in Him. Humankind, friends, humanity is not a failed project. We are not a failed project. We are redeemable, we have potential, and God can change and transform us. And this is one of Jesus's greatest lessons. He taught us the meaning of true repentance. He taught us that God does not love us because we repent. He taught us that we, on the contrary, repent because God loves us and because He calls us to repentance.

Through parables, through interactions with people, through stories, and through the entire gospel we find that God loves us before we need to ask for repentance. Just take a look at the story of the prodigal son, and you'll see this. We know that by divine grace we can stand back up, that there is hope for everyone, that no one is excluded, unless those that decide to exclude themselves.

Jesus taught us the purpose of life. He taught why we live, why we are in existence. He taught us connection with God, discipleship, mission. The purpose of life, friends, is not fulfilled when we become rich, when we hold titles and diplomas, when we are recognized, when we have status, when we become important or sophisticated. No, Jesus taught us that when we submit ourselves to God's purposes.

You know, Jesus came so that we could live with abundance and in abundance. Through His incredible paradoxes, His parables, He taught us that we win when we lose. He taught us that we are rich when we are poor for him. He taught us that we are great when we serve and that we live when we die. Who could compare to these teachings? He taught us to overcome evil with good. This sure goes against the very fabric of fallen humanity. He taught us resistance and resilience under pressure and hostility. He taught us that true spiritual maturity is not the result of pharisaic pride, but when we become completely and entirely dependent upon him.

Sin, friends, is more than just actions. This was perhaps one of Jesus's greatest lessons. Sin is more than just what we do. It is a chronic evil that is rooted within the human heart and the very nature. What does the Bible say? "Who can fathom the depths of the human heart?" Jesus taught us solidarity, to take care of those who are weaker. In the terms of His kingdom, this is true greatness. This is true greatness. Jesus taught us that true religion is related and connected to the great principle of love and not the flimsy, superficial attempts to impress others. No, here we are talking about the very essence of who God is, because according to 1 John chapter 4, verse 8 those who do not love do not know God, for God is love. God is love.

In the school of Christ, friends, we learn that the best students aren't those who glory themselves in their tiny accomplishments or religious performances. The depth of what Jesus taught us, His parables, His way of removing people from the audience and placing them up on the center stage so that they could think better, so they could react better, this is what Jesus was a master at. Everything he did or said dripped with significance and

importance and precision. Jesus was never one to just speak, to just filibuster. Jesus cut to the heart of the matter consistently and constantly. He mocked the pharisaic religion that was preoccupied with insignificant details.

His leadership style is still unmatched. His personal interest in the creatures of God is still capable of bringing tears to the eyes. He honored. He dignified. He exalted the value of women, in complete contradiction to the prejudice and devaluation of women in His days. He rejected all the traditions that depreciated people or creatures of God. He exalted monogamous marriage as a divine institution that cannot be treated with superficiality, disregard, and indifference. He taught about the Sabbath and its true meaning.

His discussions with the Pharisees about the Sabbath had nothing to do with the importance of the Sabbath day, and what I mean about this is that His discussions with them was not about the Sabbath, or the Wednesday, or the Sunday, or--it wasn't the day. That was a given. That wasn't the issue. There was no discussion. It was obvious that it was that Sabbath day. The issue with Jesus and the Pharisees was on a much deeper level. How must the day of rest be observed? And this way He removed tons of useless traditions based on the mere artificiality of experts in the law.

Friends, His person is capable of making us hate who we are, only then to fall in love with who we can become in him, transformed, redeemed by His grace. After Jesus, friends, after His lessons, after the Great Rabbi in this world, life on planet Earth was altered forever, permanently impacted by His teachings, by who He was. We see this in the very Old Testament, even before His birth here in the world. His attributes as God were already clear and communicable to the prophets, to Moses, for example. We see his impact on Moses's life.

For example, Moses, the great teacher of the Exodus, inspired by God he wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Holy Bible, and this is where we find the basic teaching of the entire history of humanity. In its revelation we find information about creation, about the Fall, about the promise of divine intervention, and the history of the human race. We find the patriarchal epoch with the great heroes of faith. We find the Exodus. We find the Ten Commandments containing the divine principles for human behavior that reflect the character of the very living God. We find in the book of Deuteronomy that reminds us that human behavior is conditioned by blessings and cursings, depending on the exercise of our free will, depending on our choices, our decisions.

The laws found within these first five books of the Bible, the virtues that we find here, are unmatched. They surpassed everything that was known in those times and everything that is known in our times. When it comes to ethics, to morality, to principles of justice, that transcend--they transcend everything that can be found anywhere else, within any other culture, within any other border, or within the limits of any other area of study and academia.

Within the laws of Moses we find the principles of health, of respect for life, of morality and justice. We find the divine warning, for example, in Exodus chapter 23, verse 2, "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil." We find the standard. Required human conduct is based on justice that only God could provide. No one else could ever fathom the depths of His standard, because His standard reflects who He is. Biblical prophets, they were not--and this is also something that I truly appreciate when it comes to studying Moses and the prophets.

The prophets, they weren't sacral figures chosen by position or by office or by politics, as were the priests in the surrounding nations of Israel. Prophets were called by God. There's nothing more. Prophets were called by God, because only God sees what is within the heart. No one chose a prophet. It was a divine convocation to serve, to teach, to correct, to rebuke, to warn, to condemn, and all of this by the will of God acting in and through the prophets. The sheer quantity of educational material found within their writings is simply astounding, and it covers every area of life.

We learn in the pages of the Old Testament that God is sovereign. He is the Sovereign Lord. He holds absolute control over everything. Our God, friends, is never caught by surprise. Have you ever become worried about the situation of the world around us as we see it, the political chaos? Apparently, the world, the natural world, has just spun out of control. God is never caught by surprise. God is never caught by surprise. Our God is the God whose hands never tremble. And so, if you are worried, my dear friend, have faith in your God, because while you cannot see the future, do know that your God is already there, preserving you and working in your best interests.

Contrary to the understanding of many, what we find in Moses and the prophets and the rest of the writings of the Old Testament, the teachings there, the lessons, they transcend time, space, culture, and borders. They are applicable in all moments of history on this world--of this world. Above everything that may be considered local and limited by the elements of culture, we find eternal principles that apply to every man and woman, child, youth of every age.

In Scripture, another great lesson here that has to do with the redemption that is brought through education is that through Scripture we learn either by similarity or by contrast. The examples, the stories we find therein are real, and they involve real men and women of flesh and of blood, real humans that lived, that walked this Earth, that had to learn in their contact their reactions and actions with God.

But while these were real men and real women that lived and walked here in this world, they are also types, parables. They're also representative. In a way, they are all us in our choices, in our decisions, in our rights, in our wrongs. All of us learning, them and us, through the divine grace of God, forgiving grace of God, the redeeming grace of God, all learning how we should be living, how we should be reacting and interacting with God. We learn through these people that the consequences of sin and the consequences of wrong choices are inevitable.

Take David, for example, the great king of Jerusalem, the great king of Israel that could not avoid the consequences of his mistakes and his errors, and these errors were reflected upon his family, upon his children. We know that. We see that. He edified. And this is--you know, this is the great story of David. He edified a recognized and a respected nation as you find in 2 Samuel chapter 8. You'll find that right there David, he--everything that he did, everything that he made, you find it right there. And most history books would stop right there. They would reflect only the positive of their heroes, but not the Bible, because the Bible's heroes are not human.

The only hero in the Bible is God. Most history books, they would finish elsewhere, but the Bible wanted to demonstrate and to show us that it is possible to be men and women according to the heart of God, and yet need a Savior. That's what we learn here. We learn in 2 Samuel, for example, 11 and 12. We find the darkest hour of David's life, where we find adultery, deceit, and murder. The guilt and the remorse because of that action with Bathsheba, the death of Uriah, all of these things, they devastated. They transformed David, leaving him devastated. In the so-called Psalms of Penitence we find his complete collapse, and there we find the king of Jerusalem baring his soul before the King of kings, his Redeemer. And we know that God forgave him, purified him.

However, friends, actions have consequences. God forgave him, but divine forgiveness does not deliver us from the consequences, at least not the worldly consequences of our actions. We know that Nathan the Prophet sent by God pronounced a pretty cold anticipation of the future. This is 2 Samuel 12:10. "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house." David reaped bitter results for what he had sown. An example of this is that his daughter Tamar was raped by her half-brother, her own half-brother Amnon, who was later murdered by Absalom, who later led a rebellion against his own father, who was then killed in battle, causing David no shortage of pain. His wives were publicly violated, just as he had secretly violated the wife of Uriah.

Friends, Scripture teaches us that we live in a moral universe, and we verify in life the same thing that we verify in the agricultural world. First, we reap what we sow. Second, we reap more than we sow. You plant a little seed, and you reap a big beanstalk. You reap more than you sow in that context. And finally, that we reap in another moment than we sow.

Another great example here of this reality was Solomon, another great figure of the Bible that begins his trajectory with humility, asking God for wisdom. You find that in 1 Kings chapter 3, and under his leadership the kingdom of Israel grew into--in domain and grew in glory. His wisdom was simply incomparable. Kings, queens would come from afar seeking his wisdom, seeking his knowledge and his counsel. He built. He planted. He accumulated riches. He wrote proverbs observing and describing the natural world. And the question is, what did he do with his success?

Well, the small, obscure dots in his life eventually became great big stains. He became a libertine. His faith in the true God was placed in doubt. He became depressed, and in the book of Ecclesiastes you find the mourning of a

truly sad man, a truly depressed man. But Scripture also bears witness of Solomon's restoration and how at the very end of his life he warned others to not become victims of the evils--of the same evils and sins as he, and that's why he says in Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verse 1, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."

The detours of Solomon faithfully recorded in the Bible portray divine forgiveness, and the wise man, as he calls himself in Ecclesiastes, then taught everything that he had learned. So, friends, what we learn is that these are just two stories that were overly simplified here for lack of time, but we understand that these stories in the Bible, the people that come and go, these shadows that we find, they ultimately reflect our biography also, how we encounter God, how we should or should not live our life.

In the New Testament and later times, we know that Jesus prepared a core group of people, His disciples, to pass on what He had taught, and when He died apparently not even one of them appeared to have understood anything. Not one. They all ran away. All of them were skulking around. Normally, this would have frustrated any human teacher. I know it would have frustrated me. If I had spent three-and-a-half years with a group of students and at the end of those three-and-a-half years apparently they learned nothing, I would probably tear all my diplomas and my lessons. I'd burn it all up, and I would go try to do something else. But not Jesus, not Jesus.

Jesus knew that His work with His disciples was complete, that He did it. He knew that it would not fail. All of them--and here we find a reflection of that, because all of them, with the exception of John, died the death of a martyr. And if we ask Him, "Well, who will continue Your work?" if we had asked Jesus, "Who will continue Your work?" He would have answered, "Well, My disciples will continue My work." And if we kind of pressed Him a little bit more and said, "Well, what if they fail?" I'm certain that Jesus would have said something around or something of the sort of, "I have no plan B. There is no plan B. I won't need it." He was sure that his education was complete and, true enough, the 1st-century church, the primitive church, became a powerful educational agency.

So, with the Great Commission-- and we find this here. In the Great Commission, Jesus placed his followers under orders, and the mission of educating and redeeming a fallen world, of going and teaching disciples to the ends of the world. What I find truly beautiful on the Great Commission of Matthew chapter 28 is the usage of the word "all." "Go to all places, teaching all people all the things that I have taught you. And, lo, I am with you always until the very end of time." You see that totality. All authority is given, so you see that everything here, absolute control, is under His hands. And what's more, this mission's hold--this mission of educating this fallen world holds true to this very day through you and through me.

We are called for this. We are called to educate a fallen world, because education primarily has to do with redemption. There are a few quotes that I would like to read as we sum up our lesson here, and you can find them in the book "Education," page 30. It's a beautiful book. The first one says this: "The true teacher is not satisfied with second-rate work. He is not satisfied with directing his students to a standard lower than the highest which is possible for them to attain. He cannot be content with imparting to them only technical knowledge, with making them merely clever accountants, skillful artisans, successful tradesmen. It is his ambition to inspire them with principles of truth, obedience, honor, integrity, and purity, principles that will make them a positive force for the stability and uplifting of society. He desires them, above all else, to learn life's great lesson of unselfish service."

So, friends, just as we know that Jesus was this true teacher, we also understand that He calls us to be true teachers. In a chaotic work environment, in an anxious and temperamental home, inside a school full of contention God calls us to be peacemakers. God calls us to be teachers of love, of peace, of hope, of salvation. That is what it means to be a true teacher and in that capacity all of us are called. All of us are not only called. We are commissioned to be true teachers.

The next quote that I would like to read is found in the same--in the sequence of the text, and it says, "In the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Colossians 1:19 says it was the good pleasure of the Father, that in Him should all the fullness dwell.



So, friends, please, if you forget everything else of today's lesson, remember this quote. Remember this phrase: in the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are one. Teachers, Sabbath School teachers, pastors, elders, deacons, deaconesses, all of you that hold the capacity of teaching, and not only that but dear members of the church, brothers and sisters, you are teachers in your neighborhood. You in that sense, you minister. You are shepherds of people in your community, to teach them, because in the highest sense of the Word, the work of education and the work of redemption are one.

And finally, the great principles of education are unchanged. They stand fast forever and forever, according to Psalm 111, verse 8, for they are the principles of the character of God. That is why they hold forever. That is why they are unchanged, to aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ will--which will make them a controlling power in the life should be the teacher's first effort and his constant aim. The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a coworker with Christ and a laborer together with God.

My dear friend, I'll tell you something, and this is very personal to me. I love being a pastor. I love it. It is the passion of my life. Of course, there are ups and downs and there are moments where I kind of--I don't know, you know? There are those quit days, those give-up days where you feel that everything is going down, but I love being a pastor. It is the passion of my life. It is my--it's my ministry.

If I were a professional pastor or not, I would want to do this, but within the pastoral ministry do you know what I love doing the most? I love giving Bible studies. That's what I am passionate about. I love studying the Bible with people. I love teaching them lessons that were taught to me as a teenager, as a child and growing up. It is something that grows on you, and the more you do it, the more you share Jesus in an active, interactive, and intentional way, my friend, the more you will fall in love with Jesus Christ.

So, please understand today that education is a work of redemption and that you have the privilege of teaching and working that with other people. I would like to finish with a word of prayer.

Dear Father God, I thank you so much for Your love for us and for conceding to us the work of education, which is, in truth, the work of redemption. Father, we are--we have such a great privilege and honor to work with Jesus, to work alongside the Holy Spirit, and to be used by God to be able to reach a fallen world, a world that is already vomiting its demons, telling us and showing us that something is horribly wrong. We thank You for being a light in this world.

I ask you to please bless, inspire, illuminate, and reveal Your will to Your children at home wherever they are right now. Use them, Father. Imbue them with Your Spirit so that they can be used by You to take the eternal gospel, the good news, to dark places in this world. I thank You, and I ask You these things not in my name, for there is no power in my name, but in the name of Jesus Christ I pray and I thank. Amen and amen.

May God bless you, my dear brother and my dear sister.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want and, most important, to share it with others.

Doug Batchelor: Among the people living in the tropics for thousands of years, the coconut has been a virtual tree of life. The people use it for food, for clothing, for water, for tools, for soap. It does just about everything. The coconut has also saved a lot of lives.

During World War II, pilots that were shot down or sailors that were stranded on Pacific Islands, they lived for many months on nothing other than the coconut trees that were on their islands. Yes, sir. The coconut is a tree of life.

One of the amazing things about the coconut is they're designed so they're actually able to float across oceans. Coconuts can go thousands of miles, after many months be washed up on some deserted sandy beach. Then, they take root, sprout, come to life, and they'll develop a whole new ecosystem, holding islands in place through a hurricane. When the ancient Polynesian travelers crossing oceans saw an island with coconut trees, they knew there was hope.

It's amazing how in virtually no time at all those living on Pacific Islands know how to make baskets and all kinds of tools from the leaves of the coconut tree. The coconuts even serve different purposes at different times in their development. The younger green coconut, they're full of water, and that will keep you alive. Mmm.

You can even make your utensils from the coconut. My spoon is part of the green shell, and here, this is the coconut jelly. Makes good for breakfast. The more mature coconuts, that's where you get the meat, but you want to make sure that they're not bad. The way you test this is you can hear the water inside. Hey, bring that mic over here. Can you hear it? That's a good one. How about we take a bite? Now, that makes a meal that will really fill you up, and it cleans your teeth at the same time.

Throughout the Bible, Jesus uses a number of metaphors to remind us that everything we need to survive comes from Him. He says that He's the living water. Jesus tells us He is the bread of life. His robe covers us with righteousness. He is our good shepherd that protects us. Jesus is the living vine through which we get our life and our nourishment. You might say Jesus is like the coconut tree, a tree of life.

You know, the first few verses in the Bible tell that God provided a tree of life for man so he could live forever, but because of sin man was separated from that tree and from the garden. But through trusting in Jesus and trusting in His sacrifice on the cross, we once again will have access to the tree of life and have eternal life with Him in the kingdom, but this is all made possible because we trust in Jesus, who is the real tree of life.

Jesus said, "Unless You eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you." But when we accept Christ as our sacrifice and we allow Him to cleanse us and fill us with His Spirit, we become new creatures, and we can be with Him in sharing the gift of everlasting life with others. Matter of fact, we can do that right now by tossing the coconut out and praying that it lands on a deserted beach.

Announcer: Amazing facts. Changed lives.

Charlie Green: My life was in turmoil. My wife and I were fighting all the time. I got away from everything and everybody. I don't know. I just always had this emptiness in my heart I wanted filled. I just felt like I went my whole life, you know, just searching for something. And my father died, and that ruined me a lot. My father didn't believe in suicide, and I didn't wanna live, but rather than disrespect him I decided I would just become so mean and someone else would do it to me and I wouldn't have to, so I joined the army thinking, "What better place to get killed than in the army?"

And while I was in the army, my daughter got injured. She was in an accident, and she was blind and paraplegic, and it's just like I felt the whole world was coming down on me. And one morning, I just really got mad, and I gave God a cussing like you wouldn't believe. I said, "I'm not Moses. I'm not Abraham, you know? But I put my sandals on just like they do, and I'm a man. I don't want to know why this is happening to me. I just want to know it's happening for a reason. If You tell me right now that this is all for a reason, then You can stack it on me from here to the end of time, and I will never complain again."

And that little TV came on. It'd been sitting there just static all night long, and there was this minister. He pops up and says, "Today's lesson is from the book of Job. God only lets those suffer that He loves the most." And I said, "Well, that's all You got to say, Lord. I appreciate it more." From that day forward, I knew that He was there and He was in my life and that He would help me.

I went to prison just almost immediately after that. I was in prison for aggravated assault. I was in one of the worst prisons in the state of Tennessee. It was full of gang activity. I got my throat cut. Fifty-two stitches in my neck. I could take those fingers and stick them all throughout my mouth.

I'd gone to the library that day because it was really about the only thing to do, but I ran across this little book called "The Richest Caveman." This book is hilarious, but it is great. I'm sitting here with this big beard. I'm thinking, "Hey, I know what it's like to look like a caveman." But--[laughing] I'm not an educated person, I guess you'd say, but I'm a simple guy. I'm just really a simple guy. That's what I loved about Doug Batchelor, because this guy is just straight out as you can get.

And my wife now, we've kept contact through all these years, and so much has gone on. And I told her, I said, "Listen, this is the center of my world right now." And I said, "I really want you to be involved in it with me. I need it." And I said, "You will, too, if you ever just take hold of it." I told my wife, I said, "Listen, I've got this Amazing Facts Bible study going here, and this is the best way for you to get this information." And I think I said, "Because it's broken down, and they give you questions and--to make you look for these things, you know? So, it's not anyone telling you. You find it on your own, and they teach you to actually use the Bible."

She was there faithfully every Wednesday, until we decided, you know, she wanted to be baptized also. She started coming around. The choice was made. On October 4, 2014, my wife and I were baptized in the water, at the same time, and we started our walk together.

I guess you'd say I went through everything that a man could possibly go through, I guess, from marital trouble, loss of family members, death in my family. My children were harmed, and my daughter was handicapped for life. I went to prison, but still I kept my word to God that He could stack it on me as much as He wanted and I'd never question Him again. And I didn't, but I could say this much: He never put nothing on me that I couldn't handle, and He walked with me through it all.

And I'd like to say that--to anyone who is in prison, not to give up. Don't lose hope. Put your faith in the Lord and study and seek Him, and He will seek you. And my name is Charlie Green, and I want you to know that you and Amazing Facts have changed my life.

Doug: Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Actually, I know they can't hear me because there's no cell-phone reception here. We're right now standing in what is known as a quiet zone, and there's a very good reason for that. Hidden, nestled among the jungle mountains of Puerto Rico is a giant sentinel, an aluminum ear 1,000 feet across.

Located 10 miles south of the coastal city of Arecibo, this enormous space-age parabolic dish is aimed at the sky listening. Built in 1963 by Cornell University, the Arecibo Observatory dish is one of the largest curved focusing antennas on Earth. The dish surface is made of nearly 40,000 perforated aluminum panels, each measuring about 3 feet by 6 feet and supported by a mesh of steel cables. The vast antenna surface covers 18 acres, or about the same size as 26 football fields.

When the huge telescope switches to radar mode, it beams out a powerful signal of 1 million watts towards the planets, moons, asteroids, and comets. The faint echo of the signal bouncing off its astronomical targets is collected by the huge dish and then amplified, allowing scientists to create scanner-like images and maps of the object. But another primary purpose for the Arecibo Observatory is SETI. SETI's an acronym for Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. They're listening for messages from above.

For over 50 years, radio astronomers have used the world's largest radio telescope to study the radio signals emanating from the cosmos. While listening to the strange songs buried in the heart of distant stars and quasars, they're also listening and analyzing every signal for signs of intelligent life. It's really astonishing when you think about it, that for more than 50 years now the Arecibo Observatory has been scanning the heavens, spending millions of dollars wondering if there's intelligent life out there. Yet in more than half a century of listening, SETI has not identified a single radio signal that seems to come from extraterrestrial intelligence. Perhaps they're missing the forest because the trees are in the way.

Some messages have actually already come from space. You know, the Bible tells us in the book of Romans faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God. It seems often when God wants to talk to us, He has to take us where we can actually hear His voice. When God wanted to speak to Elijah, he ended up down in the

deserts of Mount Sinai. There was a fire, an earthquake, and a wind, but God was not in the earthquake or the fire or the wind, but God spoke through a still, small voice. Jesus wants to talk to you. He has a plan for your life, but you need to have a quiet place where you can hear Him.

[phone ringing] Oh, it's for you.