

LOOKING UP!

By Matt Huddleston

Our culture worships success. We want a god who follows suit. Why would we choose the cross when a cathedral is bigger? Should we preach sacrifice when achievement seems brighter? Isn't it wiser to follow the Messiah when the crowd chants his name instead of staying when the soldiers drag him away?

We fall for the simplest of lies, we run from noble and brave acts, and we take watered down, soft messages instead of pure, Christ-centered instruction. We want God to work in larger dollars, bigger buildings, and more notoriety.

Preacher Billy Wilson says, "We've even turned spiritual growth (meant to be a path toward selfLESSness) into little more than MY joy, MY peace, MY walk, MY, MY, MY. Only humans could take the cross and turn it into a display rack for OUR OWN purposes. Jeremiah said that God's love is STEADFAST, and His mercy is CEASELESS. Note Jeremiah said this while Jerusalem burned, his people were being slaughtered, and those who remained were being carried away to Babylon. How's that for a plan?"

Isaiah teaches God is the God of prosperity and destruction. He created light and darkness. God uses all things for his glory. Have we created a god that is only good when he operates on our timeline and within our definitions of good?

Christ is on the throne, now and forevermore! He overcame death and everything Satan threw in his way. He is unstoppable, immovable, and victorious. Isn't it time we realign our thinking, look up to him, and let him lead the way, for there is only one way to the Father.

SERMON NOTES

Praise Him!

July 4

Truth #1

Whatever is _____, _____, and _____—think on these things.

Truth #2

◇ The _____ of _____

Whatever is _____—think on these things.

◇ _____ (_____) to prepare for greater things

Whatever is _____—think on these things.

◇ A way to demonstrate _____

Whatever is _____—think on these things.

Truth #3

◇ His _____ is greater

◇ His _____ is greater

Whatever is _____—think on these things.

When my thoughts are on things that are _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____, and _____, I will
speak what is _____.

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EPH. 1:7

Next Week:

WHEN YOU BELIEVED

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PERSONAL STUDY

It is rewarding to invest time each day in God's Word.

Mo Psalm 51:10

Start your work week with personal reflection. Is your heart, soul, mind, and strength coming from personal ambition, or is your hope in the Lord?

Tu Psalm 51:11-12

Call on the Lord to lead and even bless your life. Give him the power to guide and direct you today. Calm your fears as you relinquish control by recounting all that He has done.

We Psalm 145:1-3

Take time to praise your Father. Sing a song of praise while you drive to work. Choose one attribute of God's character, and then at each meal let that characteristic lead your thoughts of praise.

Th Psalm 113:3-4

Notice the passage of time today. Find God's presence in the sunrise, the sunset, the stars, your friends, a chance encounter, and the work He gives you. God is with you all day and even through the night.

Fr 1 Peter 5:8

We have focused our minds on God each day this week. Today, pay attention to the effects of the devil in your world. Where and when does he attack? Ask God to awaken you to your weak moments.

Sa Galatians 2:20

Let this verse be your mantra through the weekend. You have decided how you will live and why you want to live this way. Evil thoughts and desires have been crucified. Live today with Christ in you!

STUDY & DISCUSS

- Read Philippians 4:8. Take time to define each word: true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.
- How do our thoughts lead us closer to God or away from God?
- Share one negative thought you have and how you are going to combat that thought pattern this week.
- Why do you believe God loves us where we are and desires for us to be continually changed?
 - Rom. 5:8—God's love while we are still sinners.
 - Rom. 6:1-4 & 18—God wants us totally free from sin.
- Read Psalm 145 and highlight the praises that resonate with you.
 - ◇ What is one praise listed in this chapter that strikes you as unique or new?
 - ◇ How can you study and learn more about that aspect of God so that you can praise him more?
- Personal perspective: What situation are you living through now that can become a moment of praise?
 - ◇ What trouble are you currently growing through that could be turned into praise for what God will do?
 - ◇ Your mistakes are learning opportunities because of his love and Word.
 - ◇ Your hardships are praise opportunities when you declare God's plan and purpose.
 - ◇ Things that are beyond your control are times to point to God's constant control and provision.