

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Preaching

Preaching to products of our modern times.

*Caleb Kurbis | August 1, 2024*

*WELS National Worship Conference*







KENTUCKY

WEST VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA

TENNESSEE

• Asheville

NORTH CAROLINA

GEORGIA

SOUTH CAROLINA

ATLANTIC OCEAN







A photograph of a graffiti-covered wall. The wall is covered in various graffiti tags and pieces. The most prominent feature is the text "KEEP ASHEVILLE WEIRD" overlaid in a large, white, hand-drawn font. The background graffiti includes a large piece with a face, a piece with the word "MONK", a piece with "FUN & GAMES", and a piece with "LORDS". There are also several other smaller tags and pieces scattered across the wall. The wall itself appears to be made of corrugated metal or a similar material. The overall scene is a vibrant and colorful display of urban art.

KEEP  
ASHEVILLE  
WEIRD



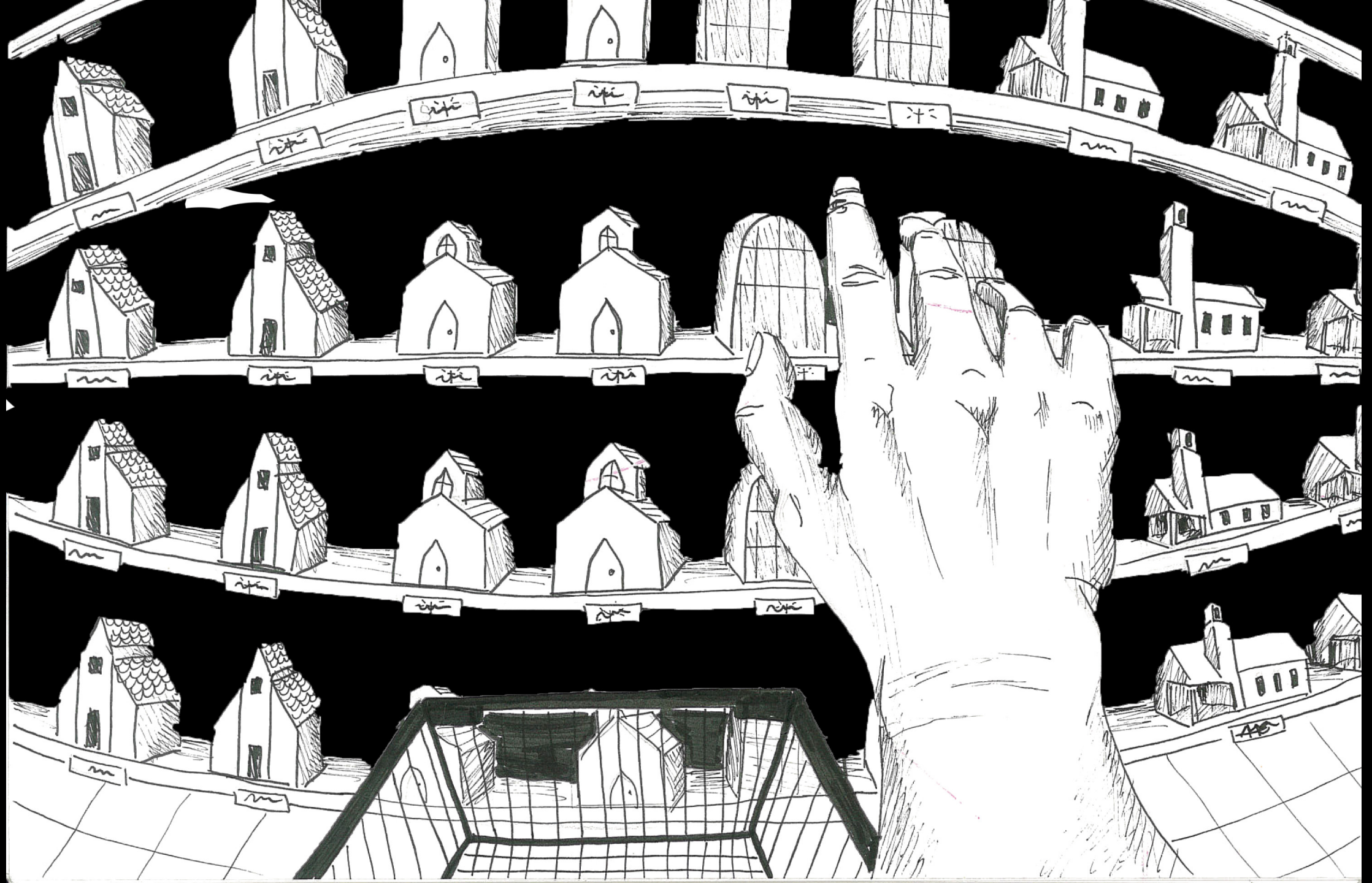
# North Carolina Neighborhood Unites Against Anti-LGBTQ+ Church



# Assumptions

- Who we're talking about
- What's our responsibility and what's not
- Professional or pastoral
- No need to repeat





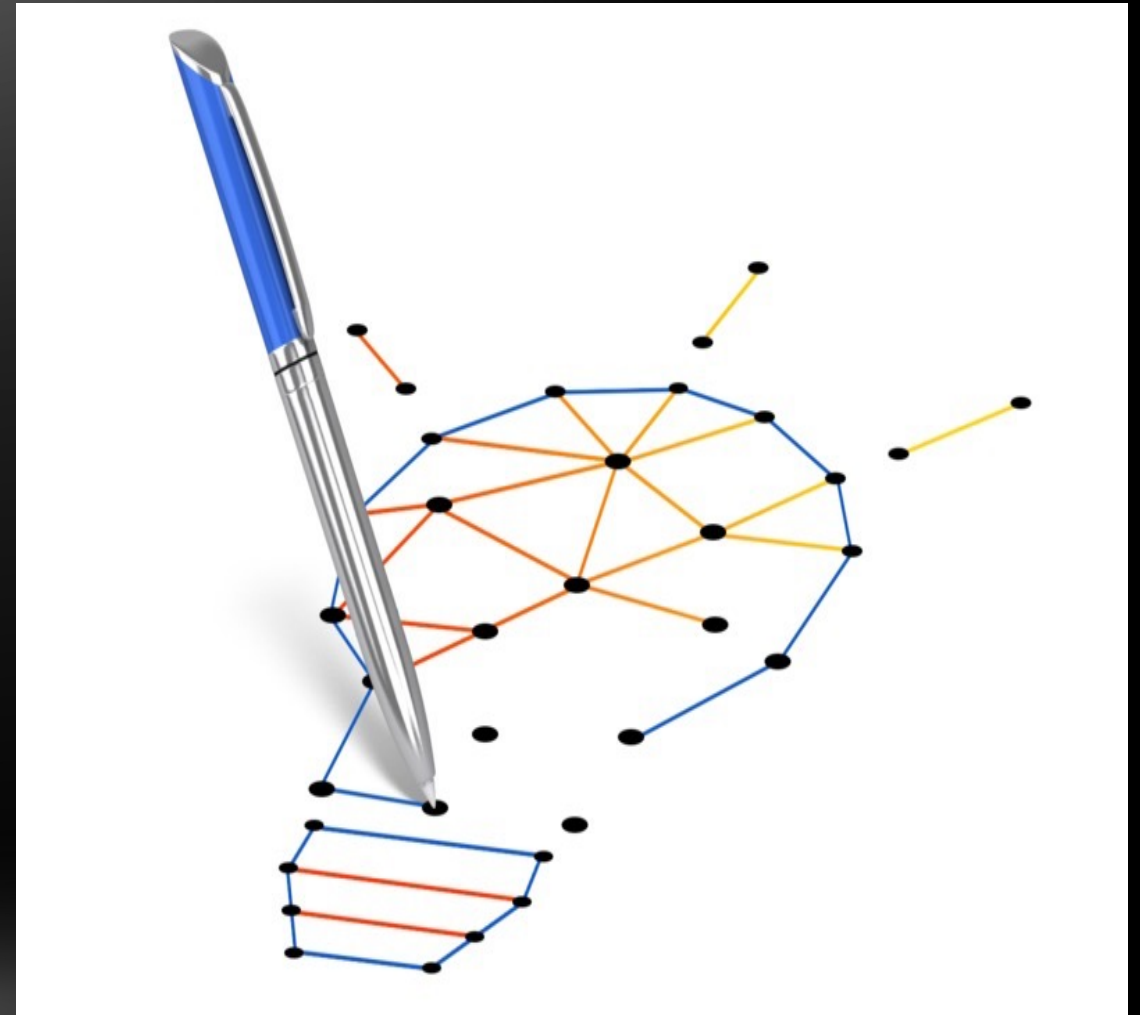




# Dots required

*“So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.”*

*~ Acts 17:17*





# More than writing





# Easter 6B – John 15:9-17

<sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.”



# Dots required

*“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”*

*~ Acts 17:29-31*



# Today's Issues

1. Biblical & Salvation illiteracy

# Pastoral tasks

1. Awareness of unawareness



# Practical Questions #1

- What dots need creating? What dots need connecting?
- What have I assumed?
- The rule of two detours . . .
- Who's in attendance?



# “Self” Everything & the Identity Crisis

*Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.*

*~ Acts 17:22-23*





# Today's Issues

1. Biblical & Salvation illiteracy
2. Self everything & Identity

# Pastoral tasks

1. Awareness of unawareness
2. Christ-centered

# Practical Questions #2

- What is the Savior saying, doing, thinking, feeling, etc. that is exactly opposite of what this world is after?
- What real or perceived blessings are found as a result of the gospel in this text?
- If this text were a painting and Christ were the subject, what does he look like? Where am I with him?
- How am I redeemed? How am I compelled?



# Emotional and/or Psychological

*“God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’”*

*~ Acts 17:27-28*



# Emotional and/or Psychological

“These sermons seem designed to do many positive things: inform, proclaim, teach, explain, illuminate, clarify, comfort, encourage, and motivate. And, sometimes, they do some less positive things: entertain, titillate, speculate, charm, beguile, and even amuse. But there is one thing that very few sermons do, and that is persuade.”



*Michael Kruger, president of Reformed  
Theological Seminary in Charlotte*



# Today's Issues

1. Biblical & Salvation illiteracy
2. Self everything & Identity
3. Emotional and/or  
Psychological

# Pastoral tasks

1. Awareness of unawareness
2. Christ-centered
3. Appealing appeal

# Practical Questions #3

- How can the law be preached so that they welcome it before I assign it?
- Might there be any deeper contexts to the malady that get to the heart of a major issue among people today?
- What ways can I proclaim the law without making it sound pointed or the same?



# Wishing it were true

“Make religion attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is. Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature. Attractive because it promises true good.”

*~ Blaise Pascal*

# “Meaning Crisis”

*Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.”*

*~ Acts 17:19-20*

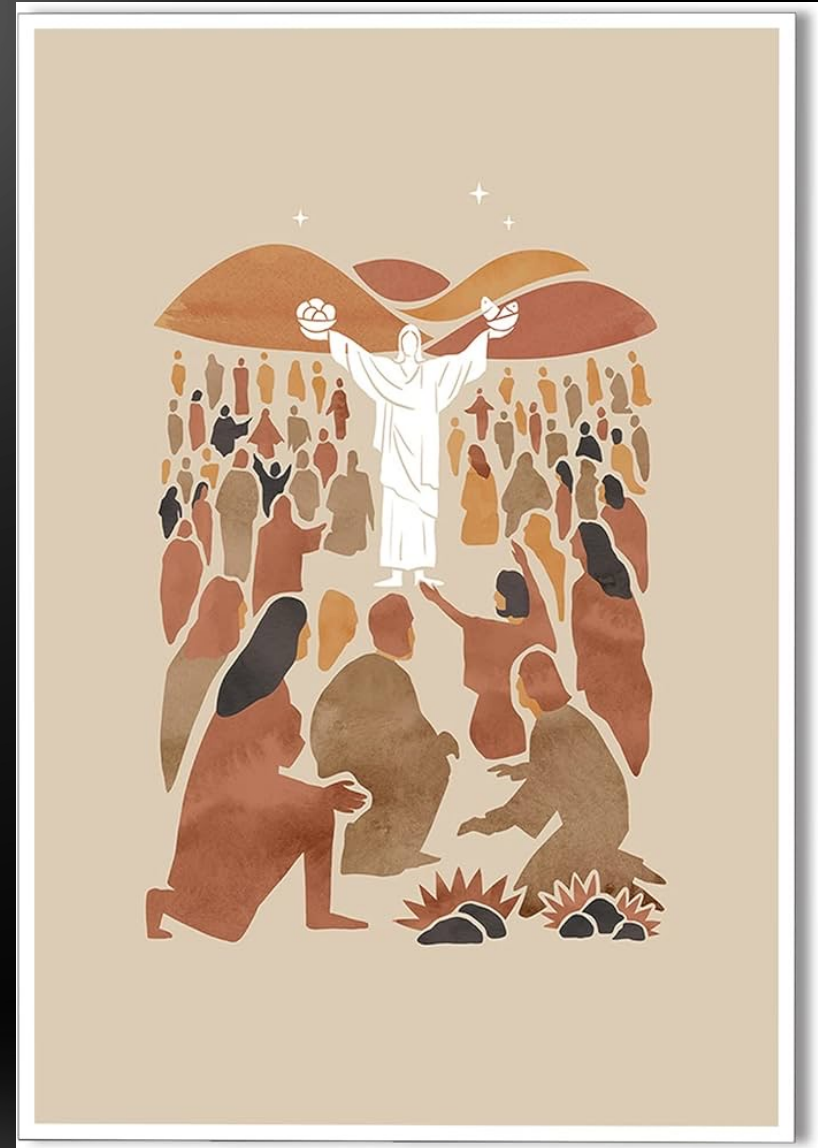




# There's more.

But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

Mark 6:37





# Today's Issues

1. Biblical & Salvation illiteracy
2. Self everything & Identity
3. Emotional and/or Psychological
4. Meaning Crisis

# Pastoral tasks

1. Awareness of unawareness
2. Christ-centered
3. Appealing appeal
4. Deep truths for today



# Practical Questions #4

- What is beautiful about this text that can be easily overlooked?
- How does this text make me wonder more about the attributes or activity of God my Savior?
- What textual features give me pause? (e.g. metaphor, analogy, allusion, mood, etc.)

# Age of Outrage

*When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.”*

*Acts 17:32*



# Today's Issues

1. Biblical & Salvation illiteracy
2. Self everything & Identity
3. Emotional and/or Psychological
4. Meaning Crisis
5. Outrage

# Pastoral tasks

1. Awareness of unawareness
2. Christ-centered
3. Appealing appeal
4. Deep truths for today
5. Measured & Consistent



# Practical Questions #5

- If/When the application flows from the text, would/am I be willing to cover all four issues?
  1. Racial Justice
  2. Poor and Marginalized
  3. Pro-life
  4. Sexuality God's way
- Can people tell my news source by what I say or how I sound?
- Does the message and the church revolve around current issues or the other way around?

# Four Key Questions to Start

- What is the point of tension? . . . the distilled purpose?
- What's the textual sin problem that leaves me answerless?
- What's the textual gospel where Christ is the answer?
- How can I best answer the “So what?!” question?

→ What's my angle?

# Examples

Jesus Raises  
Jairus'  
Daughter

Mark 5:21-43

Jesus Raises the  
Widow's Son at  
Nain

Luke 7:11-17

Jesus Raises  
Lazarus at  
Bethany

John 11:1-44



# Four Other Boxes to Check

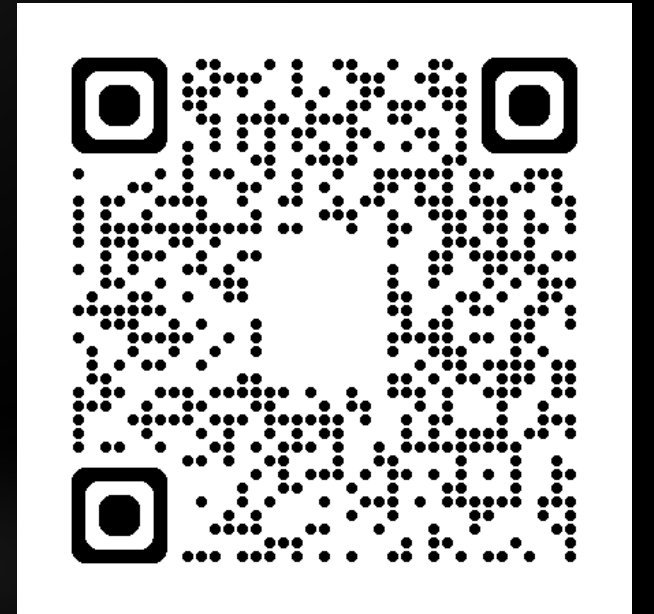
- Hearers still see trees walking (Mark 8:24).
- Hearts (and heads) in need of piercing (Acts 2:37).
- An appealing appeal (Mark 6:20).
- They will want to do something (Acts 2:37).

# √ Tomorrow's View of Today's Opinions . . .

- a. What is our Credo?
- b. Who's bored?
- c. Who cares?
- d. Who's speaking?
- e. What is our sun?
- f. What is highest and best?
- g. What can be caught not taught?

# Constructive Critique

- Any other profession
- Biannual self-critique
- Biannual brotherly critique
- Checklists & Cheat sheets
- Would your members invite their friends?  
Your answer vs. theirs.





Proper 17B (Aug. 28- Sept. 3)	Mk. 7:1- 8, 14-15, 21-23	That which defiles a person is internal; therefore that which cleanses a person cannot be only external.	Deut. 4:1-2, 6- 9	Because the LORD is near to his people by giving them his own words, he forbids them from replacing his words with their own.	Ro. 9:30- 10:4	Those who zealously pursue righteousness of their own do not attain it; righteousness can only be obtained through faith.
Proper 18B (Sept. 4-10)	Mk. 7:31-37	Jesus provides perfect, personal care to a man under sin's curse.	Is. 35:4- 7a	When God comes to save, creation is restored and sin's curse is undone.	Acts 3:1-10	Christ's apostles utilize the healing power of Christ's name.
Proper 19B (Sept. 11- 17)	Mk. 9:14-27	Jesus demonstrates his power over evil spirits.	1 Ki. 18:21- 39	The LORD demonstrates his superiority over every idol.	Eph. 6:10-18	Our struggle is against forces far greater flesh and blood, but the full armor of God makes us invincible against our foes.
Proper 20B (Sept. 18- 24)	Mk. 9:30-37	In Jesus' kingdom, greatness is found in service.	Num. 12:1-15	Miriam and Aaron bicker against Moses, but Moses demonstrates humility and willing service.	James 3:13-18	Selfish ambition is earthly and demonic; humble service is heavenly and divine.

# Causes of Salvation

J. Quenstedt

