

The Simplitist

Approaching Scripture with Child-Wonder

June 16, 2013

So, Eric, are you a Calvinist?

The Simplitist

Adopting the Child's Approach to Scripture

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity** that is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

A Five-Point Simplitist

1. Jesus
2. Jesus
3. Jesus
4. Jesus
5. Jesus

A Five-Point Simplitist

with a bit more specificity

1. Without Jesus, I'm doomed.
2. Jesus, and Jesus only is able to save.

3. Not only is Jesus able to save, but He desires to save.
4. I don't choose Jesus, but Jesus has chosen me.
5. Not only is Jesus able to save, and desires to save, but when Jesus saves me, He is also able to keep me from falling.

A Five-Point Complicator

1. Do you believe in Depravity or Total Depravity? *Without Jesus I'm doomed*
2. Do you believe in Conditional election or Unconditional election? *Jesus, and Jesus only is able to save*
3. Do you believe in General atonement or Limited atonement? *Not only is Jesus able to save, but He desires to save*
4. Do you believe in Forsakable grace or Irresistible grace? *I don't choose Jesus, but Jesus has chosen me*
5. Do you believe that there is Security in Abiding or Unconditional eternal security? *Not only is Jesus able to save, and desires to save, but when Jesus saves me, He is also able to keep me from falling*

Advice from the Major

“Jesus!”

Major Ian Thomas

The Loss of Simple Beauty

It was a tragedy when literature became an academic subject.

C.S. Lewis

(paraphrase)

It is a tragedy when Jesus Christ becomes an academic subject.

E.W. Ludy

(paraphrase)

Spurning the Bridegroom

While Loving Everything About Him

What is lost when Truth no Longer is a Person, but rather a collection of Facts to be inspected and/or questioned?

What if I approached the Humble, Gentle, Holy, Merciful Savior - His arms outstretched to embrace me and to draw me near in fellowship and embrace - but instead of entering into His arms and knowing Him as a Person, as a Friend, as a Bridegroom, and as a Lord, I stop about three feet from Him and begin to stare.

“Hmmm,” I say to myself. “So this is Jesus.”

I then proceed to take out a handy little notebook that I keep for just such occasions, thumb-click the top of my writing pen, lick my lips, and then begin to scribble down data that I am observing.

“Medium height,” I write down in my notebook, “brown hair, brown beard (nicely trimmed). Laughing blue eyes, bright big smile. What’s that? He seems to be saying something. I can’t quite make it out. It sounds like, ‘Put down your pad of paper, Eric, and just come to Me’ (Note: He surprisingly doesn’t have an accent). Size thirteen shoe, strong, athletic build, olive skin. There He goes again, talking. He’s saying something akin to, ‘Seek to know Me, Eric, not just details about Me.’ (Note: It’s fascinating that His voice is clear but His meaning is difficult to understand.) (Another Note to Self: Study Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek so that I can figure out what He is saying - He probably is saying something extremely mysterious.) His clothing is undoubtedly kingly. His Body from the waist downward is a flame of fire, so I can’t quite make out the colors or His chosen clothing style. His whole upper body is shrouded in a rainbow. Oh, He’s talking again. Hmmm. That’s interesting. When His mouth moves the rainbow about Him doesn’t move at all. He’s still talking - and I’m just absolutely mystified in watching the glimmer of His gold embroidery as His chest heaves. Okay, now He’s

finally stopped talking. Hmm. That's odd. His eyes are no longer laughing. In fact, there are tears in them that appear very similar to human tears. (Note to Self: check to see if it is theologically possible for Jesus to have tears before publishing these observations.) All in all, there is a lot of interesting data here to ponder. (Note: I'm disconcerted over the fact that Billy Bob last week declared that Jesus wears five crowns on His head, because I count six. How dare he diminish the sovereignty of God.) Well, back to the lab. Maybe I can make this a regular field trip to come and observe, and figure out all that is to be known about Jesus Christ."

Krissy's Thought

"You could speak the Truth, but if you don't speak the Truth the way that Jesus would speak it, you are doing more harm than good."

Krissy

You could study the Truth, but if you don't study the Truth as if it is in fact a Person, named Jesus, you are doing more harm than good.

The Danger of Demoting the King

And putting your intellect above Him

To examine Jesus and the work of Jesus without the Person of Jesus being heeded, yielded to, obeyed, adored, worshiped, loved, and cherished is to remove (in your heart) the Godness of Jesus from Jesus and to trample upon His Glory

- It's like assessing a Basketball player in the locker room and coming to a decision on his ability, his prowess on the court, without ever sitting in the stands and watching him play the game
- It's like assessing a plate of food as a critic and writing an article in favor or against based on staring at it intently for seven hours, smelling it, and pushing the food around to see how it jiggles, but without ever actually sticking a fork-full of it into your mouth and tasting and seeing that the food is good.

- It's like being married in certificate only - having a picture of your spouse, knowing all the factual data about them, but never actually sharing your life with theirs.
- Christianity, like marriage, is Personal.

The Simplitist's Aim

- To maintain the child-wonder of the Cross.
- To forever keep the soul-stirring awe of the Incarnation in view.
- To never lose the Holy trembling towards the Word of God.
- And yet, to grow up unto a full maturity of Christlike radiance.

How Can One Simultaneously be Ever-Childlike and yet Constantly Growing up unto a Full-Maturity? Can One be Young and Old at the Same Time?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.** Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:2-4

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: **That we henceforth be no more children,** tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Ephesians 4:13-15

God gave (George Muller) from the outset a very simple, childlike disposition toward Himself. In many things he was in knowledge and in strength to outgrow childhood and become a man, for it marks immaturity when we err through ignorance and are overcome through weakness. But in faith and in the filial spirit, he always continued to be a little child. Mr. J. Hudson Taylor, well reminds us that while in nature the normal order of growth is from childhood to manhood and so to maturity, in grace the true development is perpetually backward toward the cradle: we must become and continue as little children, not losing, but rather gaining, childlikeness of spirit. **The disciple's maturest manhood is only the perfection of his childhood.** George Muller was never so really, truly, fully a little child in all his relations to his Father, as when in the ninety-third year of his age.

Arthur T. Pierson

George Muller of Bristol, p43

The wise and prudent are the men who are conscious and confident of their power of mind and reason to aid them in their pursuit of Divine Knowledge. The babes are those whose chief work is not the mind and its power, but the heart and its disposition...With the wise and prudent, head-knowledge is the first thing; from them God hides the spiritual meaning of the very thing they think they understand. With the babes, not the head and its knowledge but the heart and feeling, the sense of humility, love and trust, is the first thing, and to them God reveals, in their inner life and experience, the very thing they know they cannot understand . . . All Evangelical Christians believe in regeneration. How few believe that when a man is born of God, **a babe-like dependence on God for all teaching and strength ought to be his chief characteristic** . . . The first and chief mark of being a child of God, of being like Jesus Christ, is an absolute dependence upon God for every blessing, and specially for any real knowledge of spiritual things . . . The first disposition needed for receiving that revelation is a babe-like spirit.

Andrew Murray

The Simplitist's Code

1. Believe the Scriptures with Child-Wonder
2. Study the Scriptures with "Knowing Jesus" as the Primary End
3. Speak the Scriptures with the utter Simplicity of the Suffering Church
4. and Live the Scriptures with the Inextinguishable Power of Ever-Growing Grace

A Closer Look at Simplitist's Code #3

Speak the Scriptures with the Utter Simplicity of the Suffering Church

What Matters Most?

That is what you share and that is what you meditate on

The Korean Church

Forced to flee from their churches when they would not worship the Japanese gods, pastors, evangelists, elders, and deacons were living in mountain caves, exhorting each other, preparing for prison, praying, and memorizing Scripture knowing there would be no Bibles in prison. They lived off just the roots of mountain plants and water from the streams but they remained strong and swift, traveling to villages and secretly sharing the Good News.

Esther Ahn Kim spent six years in prison, witnessing to the other women and giving them hope. Many of them were killed within days of hearing her message and receiving Christ. She did not discuss complex doctrines with them, but a simple message of God's love expressed to them in the Person of Jesus. She gave her food and clothes to an insane woman who was about to be executed for murdering her husband. The woman was filthy and completely out of her mind, but as Esther ministered to her and spoke to her of God's love and forgiveness, she came to know Christ and bravely went to her death, ready to meet Jesus.

Four Things Entrusted

A Korean missionary who led a young girl to Christ amidst a time of horrible persecution, knowing the girl had no access to a Church or Bible, he gave her four principles to live by:

1. Jesus is the only Son of God and is the only Savior
2. Jesus will never forsake His believers
3. Jesus is able to take all the misfortunes of believers and turn them into good
4. Jesus hears the prayers of His children

The girl grew up loving Jesus even without knowing much doctrinal specifics, and with this simple childlike faith alone she became a pillar during the time of persecution.

Four Things Remembered

I'd nearly forgotten my bible in all this time, but while I was in prison, four things were always on my mind . . . First, there is a God. Second, Jesus is our Savior and He goes with us everywhere, even prison. Third, no matter what we go through here, there is the reality of eternal life. And fourth, God's love, even in the face of torture, is always the best of ways.

Richard Wurmbrand

He's Like Me

Morse Code Gospelteering

The Barracks Gospel

The Gospel for the Feeble-Minded

The Rule of Thumb: *If Your Message Isn't Transferable (or adaptable) to Every Culture, Every Situation, and Every Mental Capacity, then something is Wrong with your Message*

It must be good for . . .

- The man about ready to die
- The child suffering from an illness
- The down-syndrome girl
- The street child in Brazil
- The simple, the mentally-challenged

The Narrow Way

Thlibō - Th-lee-bow

to press (as grapes), press hard upon; a compressed way; a way of trouble, affliction, and distress

Because strait is the gate, and **narrow is the way**, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

Matthew 7:14

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity that is in Christ.**

2 Corinthians 11:3

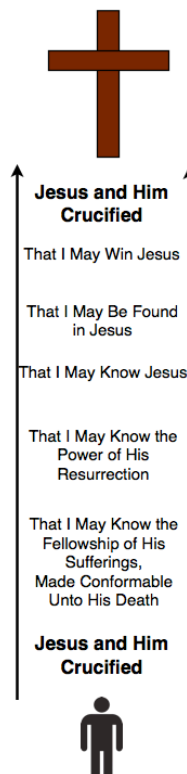
For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2



The Singular Focus of a Simplitist

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

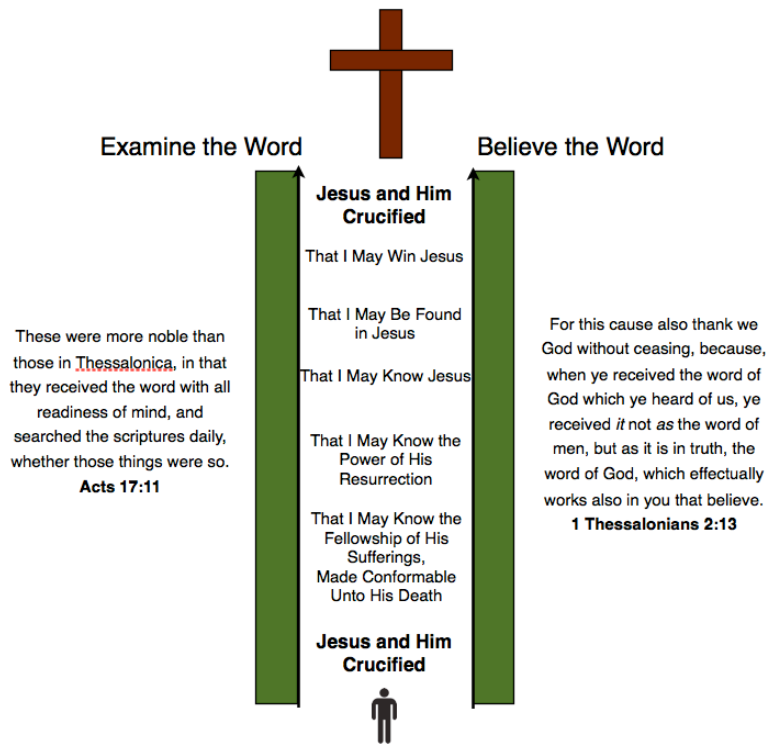


Philippians 3:8-10

Rightly Handling the Word of God

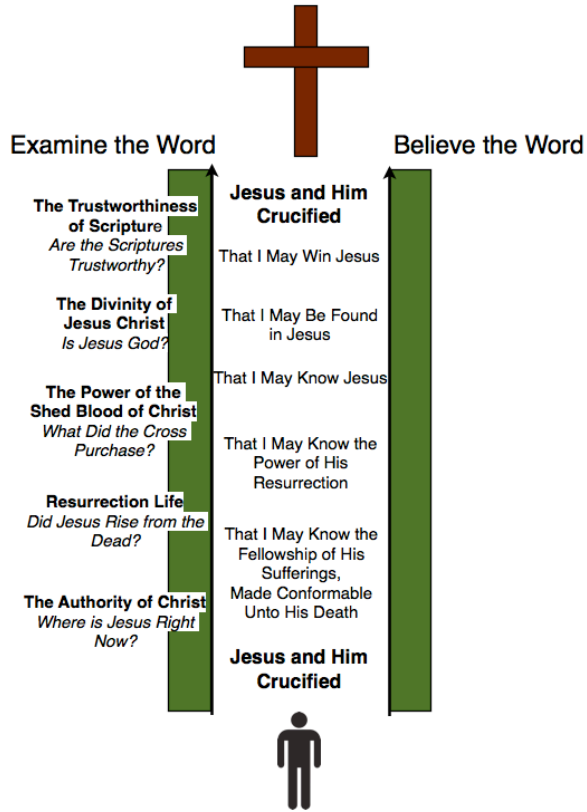
Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15



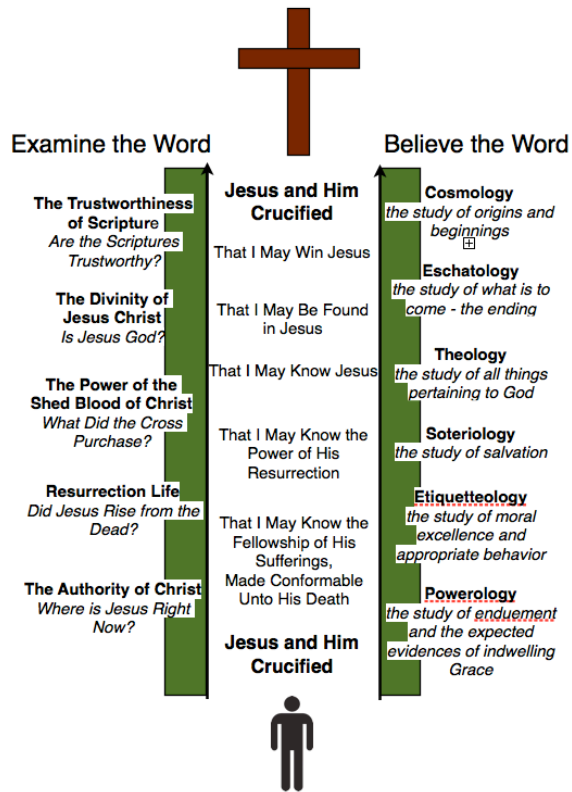
Examining as the Bereans

Taking Responsibility



Believing as a Child

Placing your Confidence firmly in the Word



The Beguiling - Taking the Attention off Center

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve** through his subtlety, **so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity** that is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

Introducing the Sadducees and the Pharisees

The Sadducees and the Pharisees were termed by Jesus, “a generation of vipers” in Matthew 3:7 and then a “wicked and adulterous generation” in Matthew 16:4. Then, in Matthew 23, Jesus tags them as “hypocrites, blind, and white-washed tombs.”

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. ... Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Matthew 16:6, 12

The Liberal Perversion

The Sadducees

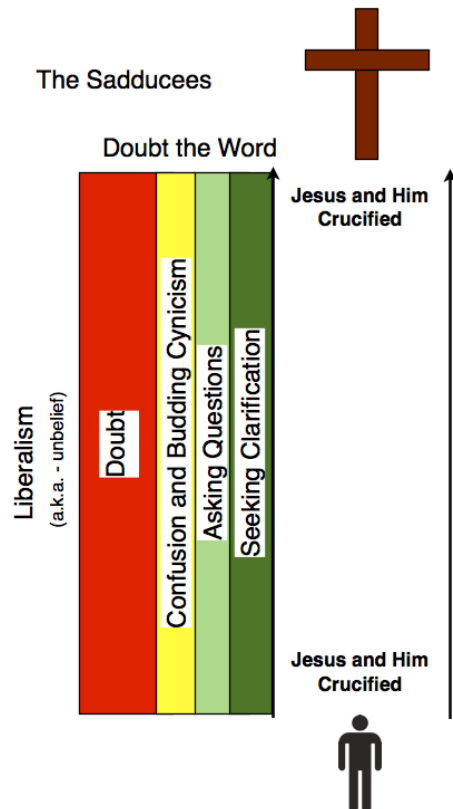
Then came to Him certain of the Sadducees, **which deny that there is any resurrection**; and they asked Him . . .

Luke 20:27

The Slippery Slope of Liberalism

1. **Seeking Clarification** - *What is this Book? Why should I trust it? Who wrote it?*

2. **Asking Questions** - *Who decided what books should be included? Why wasn't the book of Judas included? Wasn't it written by men and not by God?*
3. **Confusion and Budding Cynicism** - *What about these contradictions? Are there really flaws in this book? Is it really God's Word? Are you sure it is trustworthy?*
4. **Doubt** - *Did God really say this?*
5. **Unbelief** - *There isn't really a God.*



For Those That Struggle with the Sadducean Itch

The Rule of Thumb: God always has an answer. Always!! If you have a question about Scriptural Truth, the remedy is to trust, with childlike faith, that God planted that question in your heart and mind and He desires to answer it.

The Conservative Perversion

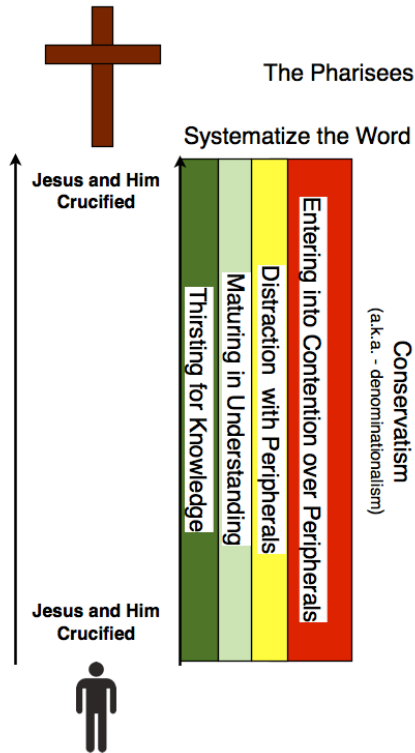
the Pharisees

You blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:24

The Slippery Slope of Conservatism

1. **Thirsting for Knowledge** - *How is this whole thing going to end? What does God say about the end times?*
2. **Maturing in Understanding** - *I think I'm grasping some key truths about the end, the second coming, the judgment, the thousand years, the lake of fire, etc. For some reason, God seemed to overlook the fact that He didn't include a formal systematic eschatological position statement in the Word of God. Hmmm. But that doesn't mean I can't write one up for myself.*
3. **Distraction with Peripherals** - *If I could fully wrap my mind around all these details of eschatology and figure out a way in which to articulate it to my generation, I would be a useful tool in the hand of God. There are so many differing opinions. It would be good for me to delineate what is wrong with each of the other views in order for me to be better prepared to defend my own.*
4. **Entering into Contention over Peripherals** - *There are quite a few ignorant folk out there that are not teaching eschatology correctly. This is quite upsetting and there is a definite need for rebuke in this matter. It really bothers me that my Sunday school class wouldn't allow me to teach my views in class this morning. I'm starting to question the integrity of my whole church over this issue. If they can't get their eschatology correct, then can I trust that anything else they are teaching is correct?*
5. **Separation over Peripherals** - *I'm out of here. Ignorance is reigning in my church, people aren't interested in talking about the significance and importance of true Biblical eschatology, and I've even been asked to stop promoting it in and amongst my church body. If there was ever a reason to separate, this is it.*

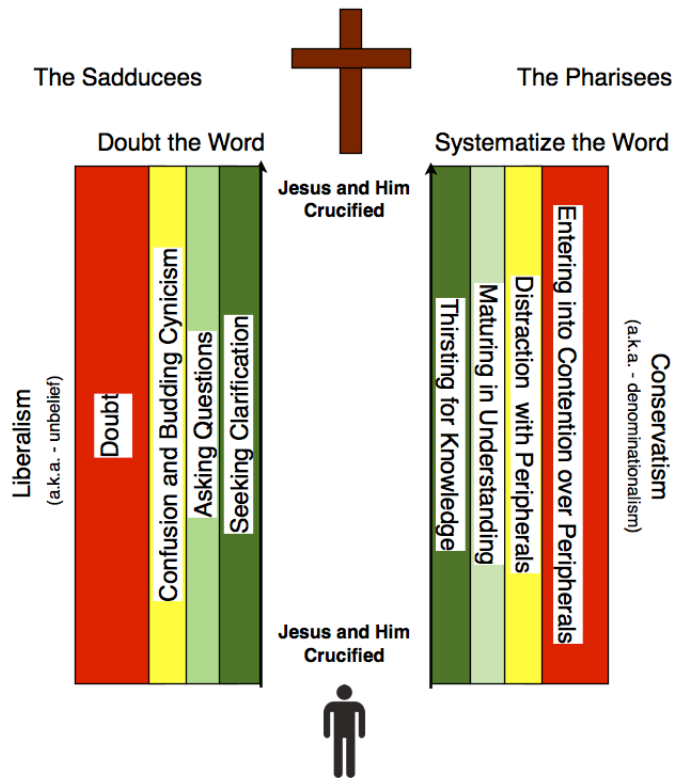


For Those Who Struggle with the Pharisaical Itch

The Rule of Thumb: Stay focused on Jesus. No matter how intriguing or how factual your study may be, if it leads you away from a simple abiding trust and fellowship with Jesus Christ, don't follow the bait. Sit at Christ's feet and you can be certain that as you study His Word, with Christ at the center of your studies, you will never fail for lack of knowledge or understanding on any matter.

The Narrow Way

The Simplicity that is in Christ is Always Under Siege



The Simplitist's Motto

Jesus is the Answer . . . *for everything*

What about my drug addiction?

What about my wrecked marriage?

What about my past abuse?

What about my financial mistakes?

What about my anger problem?

What about my fear? My anxiety? My lust? My pride? My greed? My self-pity? My dark thoughts? My addictions? My inordinate affections? My paranoia? My obsessions?

The Simplitist's Childlike Faith

Jesus is the Key that Unlocks . . . well . . . everything

- **Cosmology** - the study of origin and beginnings - He IS the Beginning, He IS the Creator
- **Eschatology** - the study of what is to come - the ending - He IS the End

- **Theology** - the study of all things pertaining to God - Well, He IS God
- **Soteriology** - the study of salvation - He IS the Savior
- **Etiquetteology** - the study of moral excellence and appropriate behavior - He IS our Righteousness
- **Powerology** - the study of enduement and the expected evidences of indwelling Grace - He IS Grace

The Simplitist's Discipline

Jesus is the Entire Point . . . *of everything*

- Of every moment
- Of every minute, hour, day, week, month, and year
- Of every discussion
- Of every down time, of every up time
- Of every study
- Of every thought
- Of every conjecture
- Of every brainstorm
- Of every action
- Of every coming and going
- Of every meeting
- and, of every sermon

The Great Metropolis - Christ

Upon finishing his sermon, the young man went to the old pastor to ask how he had done: "What do you think of my sermon, sir?" he asked. "A very poor sermon indeed," he said. "A poor sermon!" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." Why, then, do you say it was poor; did you not think my explanation of the text to be accurate?" "Oh yes," said the old preacher, "very correct indeed."

"Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good, as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," he said, "THERE WAS NO CHRIST IN IT."

"Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old *preacher*, "and so from EVERY TEXT in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is CHRIST."

And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards **the great metropolis - Christ**. And," he said, "I have never yet found a text that had no such road, I will make a road, I would go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my master, for a sermon is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dung hill, unless there is a savor of Christ in it."

Charles Spurgeon