

2017 Pastor's Reading List

1. KILLING THE RISING SUN: HOW AMERICA VANQUISHED WORLD WAR II JAPAN, by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard (2016). This was a fast paced book of accurate history. Mr. O'Reilly tells the story in such a way that even though you know the outcome...you don't want to put it down. After reading others books like **FLYBOYS** and **WITH THE OLD BREED** he has many of the same men tell their stories of the battles as we island hopped on our way to Japan and the sickening descriptions that were seen and experienced first hand. He weaves letters, memo's and speech's together in such a way that you feel like you are hearing/reading them freshly even though they are time honor relics of a more certain country and its past. He clearly shows us Robert Oppenheimer ("the destroyer of worlds"...as he named himself), Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito, Joseph Stalin and President Hoover and many of the lesser players in this drama of death and destructive leading up to and including using the "Bomb" to win an almost unwinnable war in the Pacific. We would have eventually prevailed but at what cost...millions of lives on both sides. Every historian writes from a place of bias...Mr. O'Reilly's father was in the middle of this ending as an ensign on the USS Oneida, which would have been used to ferry troops in the invasion of Japan. So, on one hand this is personal to him, but on the other, he takes the history that is so often not taught anymore and extrapolates from it all the pertinent information that enables his readers to decide whether or not America had a moral imperative to drop these bombs.

2. SIMPLICITY IN PREACHING by J.C. Ryle (1837). I love the reminders of the men of God who have gone on before me...listen to his own words a moment: "*King Solomon says, in the book of Ecclesiastes, 'Of making many books there is no end' (12:12). There are few subjects about which that saying is more true than that of preaching. The volumes which have been written in order to show ministers how to preach are enough to make a small library. In sending forth one more little treatise, I only propose to touch one branch of the subject. I do not pretend to consider what should be the substance and matter of a sermon. I purposely leave alone such points as 'gravity, unction, liveliness, warmth,' and the like, or the comparative merits of written or extemporaneous sermons. I wish to confine myself to one point, which receives far less attention than it deserves. That point is simplicity in language and style.*" He goes on to talk about how he always prefer to speak to the upper classes, but that it was his time in rural England that actually taught him how to speak for God...for that I can relate. This will be one of those little booklets that I will read over and over again.

3. TWELVE WHAT ABOUTS: Answering Common Objections Concerning God's Sovereignty in Election, by John Samson (2012). The author himself tells us why he writes this book: "*I seek to provide answers to common objections that are often raised to the concept of Divine election and predestination.*" As a young man he came to faith and began a heartfelt study of the Scriptures convincing himself of every doctrine "known to man"...then he went to an R.C. Sproul conference in 2000. He had been moved by R.C.'s teaching on the Holiness of God...I, for one, cannot imagine anyone NOT being moved by this particular work. He was all ready to go when he discovered what his topic would be...Chosen by God- the biblical doctrines of election and predestination. His said of this discussion, "*How silly that a man of that caliber would spend his energies articulating an idea so past its sell-by date.*" After the conference, he

was so moved that he took the next year and realized just how wrong his presuppositions had been and God moved him to the doctrines of grace. So years later with all of his objections still fresh in his mind and with so many in the church seeking to tear down these doctrines of assurance and salvation through God's covenantal promises, he writes this book. I love this quote on Free Will... *"The problem is not the will...it is the nature of man. Because it is not in man's nature to do a thing, like save himself or chose salvation, he is not free to do the thing."* This is a book very easy to read and follow that one can hand their fellow "unconvinced" Christian friend and let them study for themselves...though I would recommend walking along side of them through this study for greater impact.

4. **AN ATLAS OF TOLKIEN**, by David Day (2015). This is an excellent guide to any and all who are "fans" of Tolkien's seminal works on Middle-Earth lore. As an "atlas" it serves as a *"geographic and chronological guide for those who wish to navigate the waters of **The Silmarillion**, **The Hobbit** and **The Lord of the Rings**(with constant reference to lesser works on the same lore- MS) but does not serve as a substitute for reading the books themselves."* But it is also filled with specifically commissioned and created art that depicts the various events within these works dating from the creation of Arda forward to the beginning of the Fourth Age- the Age of Men...so there are copies of paintings, of charts and of maps that are new to this work that are extremely engaging and helpful in gaining a fuller understanding to Tolkien's thinking and this "new world" order that he created.

5. **A TORCH KEPT LIT: GREAT LIVES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**, by William F. Buckley, Jr., edited by James Rosen (2016). This is an excellent work of history and it is also an excellent portrait of over 50 individuals that impacted his life, the country he loved and/or the world. I did not like William F. Buckley, Jr. when I was young. He was smarter, more articulate and full of himself...or so it seemed when I saw him on when talk show or another. But to be fair, I was so consumed with myself that I sat on the edge of politics through the middle 60's to the early 80's when he was in his heyday as a conservative influence and voice. He was perhaps the strongest and most articulate voice for conservatism that the last century has produced. This book which is a compilation of eulogies gives a glimpse into how his mind worked, what was ultimately important to him and how these things impacted his life as he tells us of the impact of others. A great book. A real gift, put together by James Rosen who works for Fox News, for any and all on either side of the political spectrum who are in the least bit committed to the importance of knowing people.

6. **THE CROOK IN THE LOT: THE SOVEREIGNTY AND WISDOM OF GOD DISPLAYED IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF MEN**, by Thomas Boston (first published 1737, this re-publication 2011). As I have said in the past, this is one of the Puritan preachers and teachers that is known for his clearly understood English and how he can maintain that reality while conveying clearly the doctrines of God with great depth. This work is no different. He writes about something that a great many of the Puritan writers of old often talked about...our afflictions and how God uses them to bring Himself glory and to grow us in the faith preparing us for the new earth. The title of this book, **The Crook in the Lot** is taken from a common phrase of the day, similar in meaning to our "thorn in the flesh". The text that was at the core of this work is **Ecclesiastes 7:13- "Consider the work of God: who can make straight what He has made crooked?"** God's sovereignty is over all, even the afflictions of men. Thomas Boston says at one point in the book,

“There is not anything whatever befalls us without His overruling hand.” Boston unpacks in a clear way the benefits of suffering, their purposes, and the reward for enduring them or the consequences of trying to avoid them altogether. He shows us plainly from Scripture how we are to view our trials and how we are to behave in the trial. He speaks from personal experience as he suffered much in his life and was known to endure and praise God through them as he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God was the one who gave him his affliction to better glorify His Father in heaven. This is a read that can be downloaded for from and ought to be read by all Christians...especially today when we complain too much and pretty much refuse to endure enough.

7. TRANSFORMED: Life-taker to Life-giver: A Gospel Centered Study on Eve, Sarah and Mary, By Karen Hodge and Susan Hunt (2016). I will state adamantly here for any and all to read, I will read anything that Susan Hunt is involved in...and now so for Karen Hodge. The love and adoration for the Scriptures these 2 women have comes out even from page one and never leaves the reader wanting. It is solid in its biblical exposition in a way that will appeal to cross generations. Now having said that, It took me a chapter or so to get used to the change in writing style...it was almost as if you were in a Bible study and they wanted you to focus on particular passages and how they relate to other passages...oh, wait, that is what they were doing! Speaking directly to women they look at the lives of other elect women through the years specifically Eve, Sarah and Mary with a glance at Elizabeth and Anna towards the end of the book; including women from our own time giving their testimony to God’s covenant faithfulness in their own struggles and victories. As you read through this book you come away with God’s design for women...and for men actually...all true believers. I highly recommend this book to women and to men who need to be reading what their wives are reading so they can have a better understanding of *“how to live with her in an understanding way...”* (I Peter 3:7).

8. THE SILMARILLION, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien (this edition 2004). *“Fantasy at its absolute best”*...is how the sum of all the works concerning Middle-earth by Tolkien has been defined. And it is true. I have been reading and re-reading these stories every couple of years now and I find in them such delight and comfort...but also struggle...a good struggle, that is. Unlike most books written today it takes discipline to read and capture Tolkien’s works...especially, this one titled **The Silmarillion**, which is actually the edited version of 4 other books (Ainuinale, Valaquenta, Quenta Silmarillion, and Akallabeth), with a teaser, if you will, concerning the Rings of Power that are dealt with more in the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings book series. It takes discipline to read these books because they are not sequential/chronological...the names of people and places are extremely foreign, and our minds work overtime trying to make comparison to history and mythology so we must be disciplined to balance all this and more. These works, much like the Bible, tell of a narrative like no other-except the Bible-in my knowledge. There are many mythologies, and "beginning of the world" tales, but none in my knowledge are as detailed and “complete” as Tolkien’s Middle-Earth works, which begins with this book of origins and the founding and formulating of the world and its peoples and how the forces of evil and good constantly do battle...with evil being banished in the end. Sound familiar!?! This book is a must for any who loves the Lord of the Rings movies or books. This version also has much material added back that had been lost or was recovered later after the 1977 and 1993 version went to print. This is the “extended” version, if you will.

9. LET THE CHILDREN WORSHIP, by Jason Helopoulos (2016). This is an excellent hands on booklet for all parents of small children...or even for those who planning on having children. For in this little book (100 or so pages), Jason lays out a reason for placing and keeping our covenant children in corporate worship in all its parts. At the beginning he explains the importance of worship for God's church then he offers practical and biblical advise to encourage parents to hang in there through the hard times for it will eventually pay off for the whole family with a family worshipping together the children will grow up knowing and experiencing God's presence in worship from the earliest age. He points out more than once...because young parents need to be reminded...that our struggles are only temporary...whereas the blessing will be eternal. He also offers great advice to the church officers and the rest of the congregation on how to help parents of small children to grow into the family of God...thus growing ourselves in the process.

10. THE PASSIONATE PREACHING OF MARTYN LLYOD-JONES, by Steven J. Lawson (2016). This is yet another in Steven Lawson's biographies that fall under the on-going series heading of **A Long Line of Godly Men**. This book is highly informative and helpful...full of insights and facts regarding this great preacher of the 20th Century. He tells us of Martyn Lloyd-Jones passion for preaching but he does it by letting Lloyd-Jones speak for himself by pulling from the thousands of sound bites and quotes that exist concerning this man's theology and his love for preaching God's Word to God's people for God's glory. He quotes extensively from Martyn's book **PREACHING AND PREACHERS**, other books and lectures so that we can hear from this prince of preachers himself. Dr. Lawson surveys Lloyd-Jones sense of call...his purpose...his theology and his absolute stand concerning expositional preaching as being the one way to return the Church to its rightful place of praising God with all our hearts. And to the man who is called and confirmed by the church to preach he says, *"To me the work of preaching is the highest and greatest and most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called."* This biography actually leaves you with him having proved that statement...which left me humbled.

11. UNFINISHED TALES OF NUMENOR AND MIDDLE-EARTH, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited and annotated with commentary and maps by Christopher R. Tolkien (1980). This is an interesting collection of writings that Tolkien had scribbled out on pads during the WWI through his final days just before his death in the 1970s. Some of these "scribbling" expand on many of the topics in found in **The Silmarillion, The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings**. For instance, we have contained within this book the whole tales of the Children of Hurin, which has also been made into a book all its own. Then there is the expanded "history" about the long ages of the Numenoreans before its Downfall. Much is written concerning Galadriel that is found nowhere else concentrating on the lands of Middle-Earth from the 2nd Age through the Third, and to the War of the Ring in much greater detail. At times there is more annotation than actual works as Christopher tries to layout and explain all the different connections and seeming contradictions from some of the writings on various subjects that span decades of work. This book is a "scholarly" work for the most interested in the history of Middle-earth. If you suppose yourself to have been stretched by reading **The Silmarillion**, this work will take that stretching to the next level with all the additional details often sounding like real history rather than a history devoted to a fictional place and time. In fact, it almost convinces you of the "realness" of Middle-Earth. Excellent!

12. BLOODLINES: RACE, CROSS, AND THE CHRISTIAN, by John Piper (2011). John Piper's own statement about this book sums it up, "*The aim of this book has been to encourage you to pursue Christ-exalting, gospel-driven racial and ethnic diversity and harmony—especially in the family of God, the church of Jesus Christ.*" The scope of this book is concerning solidarity in faith as the only means for the "racial divide" to be conquered. If it doesn't start within God's people...it will NOT permeate out into the culture. The sanctuaries of the Church must not continue to be the most segregated place on Sunday morning...and yet, he makes it clear throughout, these things cannot be forced. He makes an excellent case using TULIP to show how our theology is best equipped to keep us from racial conflict leading us to racial reconciliation and solidarity. As God's people are from every nation, language, tongue and peoples...we know that God sees His peoples as equal. Diversity of color and culture all under the banner of Christ adds to our unity in Christ. Piper's masterful use of Scripture leaves anyone brave enough to read this book convinced of our own sins of prejudice, whether against black people or any other ethnic group in the world. God shows no partiality so we are not to either. A must read for every and all Christians serious about finding within themselves what keeps us separate from one another in Christ.

13. THE SHADOW OF CALVARY: The arrest of Jesus in light of the fulfillment of the Scriptures, by Hugh Martin (1822-1885). Hugh Martin set out to be a mathematician's mathematician but God had other plans and he called him to be the first preacher of a "new" denomination called the Free Church of Scotland. Mr. Martin was also the mentor of such famous preachers and theologians as Chalmers, Bonar and McCheyne. These messages (over 300 pages) deal exclusively with the last acts of the passion week of Christ from His arrest to His crucifixion. What makes these so wonderful, aside from the mastery of biblical insight and commentary they provide, is that they seem to allow us to see into the heart, eyes and struggles of our Savior in those hours and minutes before His crucifixion - so that we can sense the pain and struggle to the depth of which our Savior felt these things. With the Bible as His guide he lets us know exactly what the cross meant to Jesus in His being able to carry out God's Will to the glory of God. These messages have been put into a book form which you can get for a nominal fee on line or you can find it for free on monergism.com...in an e-book form. It is well worth the read if for nothing else to get a better reason for why we should be humbled by the sacrifice and substitutionary atonement of our Lord and Savior on our behalf.

14. Christ's sufferings for Man's Sin, by Richard Sibbes (re-printed 2016). Richard Sibbes (1577–1635) was an English pastor and theologian. As a leading Puritan, he influenced George Herbert, John Wesley and Charles Spurgeon. He is one of my favorite Puritan pastors. His books, which I have read and put up on this site in different years, have been a real encouragement to me as I have struggled from time to time in ministry with fatigue and too many questions. *The Bruised Reed and The Soul's Conflict* are both treatises that speak of God's work of sanctification on us and how in this life we are called to endure and when we get to the end of our strength we always can crawl up to the trough of God's love to be refilled by His Spirit even though we shouldn't bring ourselves to this point, since God is with us always. In this short treatise, he reflects on **Matthew 27:46** — "*About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*", showing us, His children, why and how Jesus was forsaken for us...how He drunk deep from the cup of God's wrath so that we would only need to sip of the cup in this life.

This thought alone encourages me to keep going. This little treatise is free on Monergism for any and all to download and read. It isn't an easy read since the English is the King's English and common slang of the time...so wade slowly through this deep and refreshing work.

15. THE REFORMATION: HOW A MONK AND A MALLET CHANGED THE WORLD, by Stephen J. Nichols (2007). He wrote this book in preparation for the 500th birthday of Martin Luther but then expanded it to include histories of all the other major players of the Reformation as well...which makes it a great book to pick up and read in this 500th year since the reformation formerly began with a Monk taking a mallet and nailing his 95 Theses to the door at Wittenberg. His style of writing makes history, especially church history fun. He brings the men and women of the Reformation alive and makes them real to us. There is a particularly great chapter on the women of the Reformation from Luther's wife Katherine to Anne Bradstreet in the new world. We see their accomplishments and the martyrdom of others for Christ, like the story of Lady Jane Grey, a young theologian in the Reformed teachings, who was Queen of England for 9 days. This book is particularly appropriate for this year...but for any year - for these stories need to be read and they need to be told throughout the history of the Church until Christ returns.

16. THE WAY OF SALVATION, FAMILIARLY EXPLAINED: IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN, by Archibald Alexander (1839...reprinted 2017). This truly is a gem of a book. He gives us a bird's eye view of devotions with his children. They from the oldest (15) to the youngest (8) ask questions on topics such as the soul, catechism, why Christ had to come and many other like questions that often stump parents when asked. Wouldn't we all as parents love to hear something like this from our children; *"Father, I wished to hear you explain more fully why it was necessary for God to send his own beloved Son into the world to save sinners. F. I told you that God is so holy that he cannot suffer sin in any of his creatures to go unpunished. The sinner, therefore, must die..."* A great book that all fathers and mothers ought to read as they decide how God would have them raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It's a short read...only 78 pages or so.

17. LIFE OF FAITH, by Richard Sibbes (1577–1635 reprint 2016 in eBook format). I concur with D. Martyn Lloyd Jones when he says about Richard Sibbes, *"I shall never cease to be grateful to Richard Sibbes, who was balm to my soul at a period in my life when I was overworked and badly overtired, and therefore subject in an unusual manner to the onslaughts of the devil.... I found at that time that Richard Sibbes... was an unfailing remedy. His books **The Bruised Reed** and **The Soul's Conflict** quietened, soothed, comforted, encouraged, and healed me."* This book is a series of sermons on Gal. 2:20, that deal with the Life of faith put together so that the Christian can come away from this study with an understanding of the assurance that we have been granted in Christ. We see such questions, objections and answers as these, *"Quest. What is the reason that so few find strength and comfort in Christianity?"* and *"Obj. But, may some say, how should I go on to finish this great work of grace? It is a mighty thing to attain to, so many sins to overcome, so many temptations to buckle with, so many right hands and eyes to cut off and pull out. Ans. I answer, Faith teaches us to fetch all from Christ, to beg his Spirit to help us in the course of sanctification, that by his might we may prevail; and so in all mastering sins beg strength of Christ, and then set upon the walls of Jericho, and they shall fall before*

you.” As always pastor Sibbes seeks to make the truths of Scripture attainable and clear for those who may be struggling in this life. A real encouragement is this small booklet (70 or so pages).

18. STAR TREK 101: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WHO, WHAT, WHERE AND WHY, by Terry J. Erdmann and Paula M. Block (2008). I didn’t realize the age of this book when I purchased it because it doesn’t take into consideration the current “alternate universe” movies that have come out...focusing on the TV series’ and the movies up to Star Trek: Nemesis...giving the ends and outs of each. This book also does something I have never seen before in print as it seeks to give an abbreviated synopsis of each episode for each Star Trek TV show up to this point. It is THE Star Trek trivia guide to be sure. Everything you want to know about the T.V. shows, the movies the main cast members is in this book. A must have for any true Star Trek fan...oh, and did I say that it is funny as well!?

19. THE HOBBIT, J.R.R. Tolkien (1937, re-printed version 1973). What a journey from there and back again! This volume is one of great adventure and is a delight to read of such loyalty, valor and good standing in the face of such evil. Tolkien’s own description speaks of a time between faerie and the dominion of men...a time of great wonder, great tragedy, and greater still victories over evil. Not as hard to read as say **The Silmarillion** or the **Unfinished Tales** so reading is enjoyable and relaxing as we encounter a world of Hobbits, trolls, dwarves, dragons, elves and wizards in an journey for the ages!

20. THE GRACE OF CHRIST: SINNERS SAVED BY UNMERITED KINDNESS, by William Swan Plumer (1853-reprinted and formatted to ePub by Monergism.com, 2017). This is perhaps the best book I have ever read on the doctrines of Grace. He is extremely thorough and yet was able to give a most complete treatise in just under 500 pages. He begins with an extensive section on the fallenness of all men, then he moves into another section of the properties of grace. He spends the rest of the book proving the doctrines of grace from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the documents produced by the church up until the time of this work’s original publishing, while giving extensive quotes from each to ensure the reader of the validity of these doctrines and how they have been espoused by the true church throughout time. He gives perhaps the best discussion on justification in print...too bad that those who hold to the “New Perspectives on Paul” did not first read this worthy book. There is an interesting section near the end of the book dealing in 6 chapters on the believer’s victory over death...and in these sections he gives us actual quotes from Scripture through Church Fathers of their outlook on death - many from their death bed. And he does one better by also giving us a whole chapter and a half from women of the church through the ages and how they viewed death in the Lord. This book held me captive as I read it...a must read for all truly interested in the Doctrines of Grace.

21. A CABINET OF CHOICE JEWELS, by Thomas Brooks(1669). A book of just over 200 pages reformatted to .mobi, ePub and PDF through Chapel Library in 1998. This book is amazing. Pastor Brooks clearly lays out the case of what hypocrisy looks like in contrast to true Christianity. In this short treatise (110 plus or minus pages) he has more ways to define a hypocrite than I have ever seen, he states, *“Pleasures, profits, and honors are the hypocrite’s all he aims at in this world; they are his trinity which he adores and serves, and sacrifices himself to”* ...and he uses a plethora of Scriptures to prove his point. And at the same time, he spells out the character of the true believer. The simple contrasting language he uses build and makes his

case so well. He says in another place, *“Common grace looks only to some particular duties, but saving grace looks to all. Renewing grace comes off to positives as well as negatives; it teaches us to cease to do evil, and it teaches us also to do good.”* Brooks is a master at understatement and is very easy to read and understand. Why the need for such a book...well for me, it is too easy to give myself excuse for the “little” hypocrisies that I do because I don’t think of them that way. This book points them out so I can offer them up to God.

22. THE FINAL JUDGMENT, by Jonathan Edwards. This is a masterful work by Jonathan Edwards on a subject we Christians only talk about in passing...as if we are afraid of it or something. He deals with the sovereignty of God over all things and along with His judgments upon the whole world in a short and “simple” way...which is sometimes uncharacteristic for Edwards. But, given the importance of this subject that believers and non-believers would understand... he has spoken with great clarity so that both understand the blessing and the judgment that awaits. Edwards is known for his sermons concerning judgment, especially the final judgment, and this treatise is no different and should be read and re-read by all Christians seeking to be comforted by the truth of Scripture as to dispel the confusing statements often made by the Church. Edwards does not delve into speculation but lets the Scriptures speak for themselves...something any and all of us can do if we had half a mind because the same Spirit that was at work within him is at work within us, that we might be comforted by the truth concerning final judgment as much as the truth concerning Jesus securing our salvation as we await His return. A great read...90-100 pages depending upon the free download you chose.

23. PEARL HARBOR: From Infamy to Greatness, by Craig Nelson(2016). While the book “seems” to be researched and reported well...to the novice it may be acceptable but to those who love history he makes too many “rookie” mistakes with history...like with the actual length of the Japanese torpedo, when Stimson, Marshall and others were actually appointed by FDR, the caliber of weapons on the USS Arizona...and even some of the communiques that have been discussed other places that are either out of place in time or were not given in the correct context. As has been said by other people this may be a “good” update for a generation who has all but forgotten WWII, but when you don’t seem concerned with details that does overshadow the overall picture. However, the one problem with merchandising this history to a modern generation is its size(over 500 pages in length). It reads mostly like a textbook and is extremely full of detail but I believe especially concerning the Japanese history and mindset a better book is **FLYBOYS** by James Bradley. After seeing “all” the information that the US had that should have prepared us for this coming surprise attack, the book picks up its pace moving from strictly historical academic information to the attack itself. With rising anticipation, the reader is glued to the words written as if we didn’t already know the outcome which, of course, adds to the reason to read this book...it takes awhile but once there, **the** reader is rewarded. Another grand trait that we find in this book and others like it is in the giving of the story from the perspective of both sides...Japanese and U.S. The book also ends with the names and citations of the Medal of Honor recipients of that day in December 1941...a day that will live in infamy...an appropriate ending to remember those who gave their lives for us.

24. A Heavenly Conference, by Richard Sibbes (1656) is written about Mary Magdalene’s conversation at the tomb after Christ’s Resurrection. It is written for all believers concerning our union with Christ our Lord and Savior and Spouse, friend and brother. It is written in Old

English for the most part. While the thought flow of the treatise is easy to follow the actual language can be a bit difficult...but what he has to say is NOT being said by others today. His argument and exegesis is wonderful as well as his application for us even today. Though only a few words are exchanged between Mary and Jesus, Rev. Sibbes saw within them the gospel in a nutshell. I love this assessment of this work, that I just came across today; *"Christians today need not only the truth and comfort Sibbes offers here; they need his heartfelt delight so that they live for no other end than the very glory of God."* --Michael Reeves (Roughly 184 pages in paperback...not sure about ePub. Which can be downloaded for free from Monergism.com)

25. A Treatise on Earthly-Mindedness, by Jeremiah Burroughs (1640's). In this important work, Burroughs shows from Scripture the great sin of thinking as the world thinks rather than thinking God's thoughts after Him. The Puritans rightly discerned the relationship between a person's doctrine and their walk before God and fellow man. This little treatise (100 plus pages) enables the reader to clearly see the difference between the earthly-minded and the heavenly-minded. In our day and age there is a phrase, *"They are so heavenly-minded they are no earthly good"*...and it is meant as a slam against the pious believer. Puritans such as Burroughs would love to meet just one of these people...for heavenly-minded is what the Bible seeks for us who are His. Another great read for any seeking to grow in their faith.

26. Day of Judgment, by various authors, edited Chapel Library and Free Grace Broadcaster (2017). In this issue we find 10 small treatises on the Final Judgment from men like Edward Payson (1783-1827), D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981), John Newton (1725-1807), Abraham Booth (1734-1806), Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), Samuel Davies (1723-1761), J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), and William S. Plumer (1802-1880). One of the things that stands out about these treatises is that while we have differing views, in say, church polity represented here they each hold the same views concerning the final judgment. Also it is refreshing to see so much written about the two groups of people that God will deal with in the final judgment...the elect and the non-elect...or, as Burroughs calls them in the book above the earthly-minded and the heavenly-minded. We see the joy within these treatises as well as the condemnation...the balance of both that is promised by God. No one writes like this anymore. Good stuff and it is a free eBook through Free Grace Broadcasters.

27. The Doctrine of Repentance, by Thomas Watson (1620-1686). This is a fine book and a subject that needs to be reprinted and re-read today for it seems to be a topic of little significance today. And yet it is foundational to true Christianity. Interestingly in his own introduction he makes this claim, *"A good case could be made out for believing that repentance is one of the least used words in the Christian church today. In a world that will not tolerate the mention of sin, and in churches where it has been defined only in sociological terms, the biblical teaching on repentance has inevitably been ignored. Knowing what repentance is, and actually repenting is essential to true Christianity."* The times do not change much as we see that even in his writing this was a topic that was not much talked about. Thank God for the Puritans that saw the need in the church not to walk away from such important doctrines. One of the strengths of this book is how it handles the nature of repentance consisting of sight, sorrow, confession, shame, hatred and turning from sin. Something that I thought interesting is when it is pointed out that though confession is directed primarily to God, there are occasions where it should be done to *"some prudent, pious friends, who may advise him and speak a word in due season (James*

5:16)." Then Watson adds, *"It is a sinful modesty in Christians that they are not more free with their ministers and other spiritual friends in unburdening themselves and opening the sores and troubles of their souls to them. If there is a thorn sticking in the conscience, it is good to make use of those who may help to pluck it out."* This is a second reading for me...As I was going through James in the sermon series I felt the need to re-read this text as if it was all new again, realizing how little I repent and how little import I place on on-going repentance. Oh, that my God would forgive me and that I would teach more on this most necessary subject. (a small book of 120-150 pages depending upon how you get it.)

28. The Application of Redemption, by Thomas Watson (1620-1686). This small booklet reads almost as a Sunday School lesson plan though they did not have Sunday School back then. This is a sermon series where he is teaching through the Westminster Confession of Faith on the topic of Redemption. Listen a moment to his own words of truth; *"How happy is a justified person who has the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him! Peace flowing from justification is an antidote against the fear of death and hell. 'It is God who justifies, who is he that condemns'" (Rom 8:33).* Excellently treated. Easy to read. In fact, if you have those among you who are still questioning the doctrines of grace this would be an easy booklet to give them. It can be found in printed form or from Monergism.com as a free eBook. It is only 120 plus pages and is an easy read especially if you are seeking to teach on these subjects. Rev. Watson is one who seeks to make the Scriptures teaching as clear as possible since during his time there was so much apostasy between the Roman catholic Church and the Arminian believers...not that much different than from today, which makes the re-printing of this resource of extreme value for today as well.

29. THE GOSPEL: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ, by Ray Ortland (2014). Ray Ortland's basic premise is a simple one: The Church is to exhibit a balance between Christian doctrine and Christian culture that is defined by the doctrine of the Bible. Beautiful relationships in the church combined with the beautiful doctrines of Scripture enables the Church to portray the beauty of Christ...making the glory of Christ more visible. In fact, he doubles down by saying that Gospel doctrine creates a Gospel culture with in His Church that will be a blessing to itself and then to the rest of the dark world that God has placed us in to fulfill our part of the covenant. This is a part of a series of book from 9Marks Ministry on building healthy churches. This is the only one I have read as far as I can remember. There is much to be commended in this book...and I believe the author does in fact believe that salvation is all of Christ but his theology betrays him in that he is throughout the first half of the book seemingly pushing for a "decision" from his readers...which in my mind waters down the overall thrust this book could have. Having a complete covenantal doctrine of the gospel will in fact ensure a gospel culture...to the degree that it can be achieved this side of heaven. I am convinced enough of it can be ensured this side of heaven to keep us coming back to that truth as we look forward to that DAY! It is not long...144 pages paperback or about 250 through eBook which can be downloaded free from both 9Marks Ministries and Monergism.com.

30. AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, by Thomas Manton (1620-1677). He was the clerk to the Westminster Assembly and a chaplain of Oliver Cromwell. This book is like the one Troy put together for me on Ephesians...this is a long sermon/lecture series given at Stoke-Newington in Middlesex, near London in the 1640's. This is considered by many to be his

greatest of all his works. Manton is an everyday man's kind of preacher, teacher...speaking not with high oratory but powerfully none the less for what he says in these pages speak clearly to the heart of the Christian man and woman. He was considered among the Puritan fathers as "*a mighty mountain of sound theology*". This is a foundational book to help the student understand what was being said so that we can begin to look like God planned for His church to look. It has been re-printed often under other names like **50 Days with Thomas Manton in James**... or simply **James**, edited by J.I. Packer and Alister MacGrath. Rev. Manton seeks to dispel some of the common mis-perception concerning this book and speaks with great authority as to how the Christian is to exhibit their faith through their works. Good stuff even though it is almost 500 pages long.

31. KEEPING PLACE: Reflections on the Meaning of Home, by Jen Pollock Michel (2017). I love her emphasis in this book aptly said, "*to be human is to long for home.*" She posits that "home" is among the most fundamental of human longings...and one that will never be completely fulfilled in this life. She does a wonderful job of weaving Scripture, church history and her own personal search for home together to show just how we all ... Christian and Non-Christian seek for home as it is part of our basic DNA...our being made in the image of God. Of course, our search for home is the never ending search for God Himself that drives us in so many ways away from home...the last place of comfort and the fulfillment of God's promised rest for the believer. There is much here to be commended as she also weaves the angst of modern culture into the fabric of this book so well that we see clearly the longing and the lost-ness of the world around us...just outside our earthly homes...and what we should do as those with the actual promise of a forever home. This is how she puts it, "*Christian men and women, praying for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, work to make it possible for all human beings to flourish—now and into eternity. Housekeeping, as an important dimension of the home story, insists that an in-between life must never be an idle one. To be blessed is to be sent.*" (around 250 pages)

32. THE LORD OF THE RINGS, by J.R.R. Tolkien (50th Anniversary edition, 2004, 1100 pages). This of course is a re-read of this classic book. As I have said as I have read through again all my Middle-earth books this year...these are stimulating reads...some harder than others, which engage my mind much like the Bible does. However, as I have gone through this reading I have been hit with a couple of truths about them. It has been said by skeptics through the years, "*It is often supposed that despair is more intellectually credible than hope.*" But in a lecture given by Tolkien in 1938, Tolkien defended the fairy tale against the accusation of primitivism. He said, "*The fairy tale illuminates the nature of absolute reality. At its heart the fairy tale depends on the stubborn belief in the triumph of good over evil, something called 'eucatastrophe' ('eu' for good, 'catastrophe', for overturning). 'Eucatastrophe', or the fairy tale's happy ending, was not to be confused with wishful thinking, because the happy ending is the far-off gleam or echo of evangelium in the real world.*" In other words, fairy tales tell not just good news but true news: death has no final word, evil is vanquished, justice reigns. It is continuously interesting that Tolkien, like C.S. Lewis in his **Chronicles of Narnia** ...shows us stories of hobbits, elves, dwarfs, men and orcs, fauns and beavers and Father Christmas, that tell us the story of home as the Scriptures tell it: the world has fallen from its original perfection, but it will one day be restored. "*The enduring legacy of these stories testifies to the resonance of their hope. Humans long for the thaw of winter and the return of the king. They want to go*

home.” (From: **KEEPING PLACE: Reflections on the Meaning of Home**, by Jen Pollock Michel).

33. YOU CAN CHANGE: God’s Transforming Power for Our Sinful Behavior and Negative Emotions, by Tim Chester (2010). The title may sound a bit therapeutic in nature to some but this book is anything but...at least from a modern understanding of therapy. This is NOT another self-help book that makes you feel good about whatever you are doing to make yourself “better”. This is not a book that begins with the modern fatal assumption that we are basically good with maybe a few loose screws...that aren’t our fault. This book clearly takes us to Scripture and like Scripture begins with our sinful nature as the deterrent to our growth as people...laying squarely the blame on us and our own evil desires. He states at one point, *“But sin is much more than sinful acts. It’s the built-in bias against God that has corrupted our thoughts, desires, and will, making us subject to compulsive behavior and causing us to suppress the truth (Romans 1:18–32). Actions that look involuntary or ignorant actually reflect our deep-seated corruption.”* Like the Puritans of old he pulls no punches on our sinful nature. But also spends a great deal of time “reminding” us of who we are in Christ and how Christ’s righteousness will root out the fallen nature still present in our lives in this life. But he makes it abundantly clear that this will take a lifetime as God prepares us for the new heavens and new earth. Sanctification is a marathon he will say, but God, through Christ by the continuous work of the Spirit will accomplish what He set out to do for each of us...so we can take heart. Tim Keeler writes of this book, *“A book about Christian growth that is neither quietistic nor moralistic is rare. A book that is truly practical is even rarer. Tim Chester’s new volume falls into both categories and therefore fills a gap.”* Only 200 plus or minus pages depending on the format that you get it in (free in pdf and eBooks) but oh so worth your time.

34. BEN HUR: A TALE OF CHRIST, by Lew Wallace (originally published in 1880). Many have said that this book on the life of Christ was the most influential book of the 19th Century. This book is a lovely novel surrounding the story of Christ from His birth to His death on the cross. But it is also a story of human tragedy and redemption as Judah Ben-Hur, being raised in a well to do, almost royal family of the Sadducean sect of Judaism, becomes falsely accused of a crime, sent to his death only to be miraculously raised up brought back to prominence in order to help bring in the kingdom of God that would overthrow the Roman Empire setting up the Messiah as the King. A Messiah that he knows is alive and grown to be a man...so he waits for his marching orders. This book is filled with intrigue and suspense with many twists and turns that even the 21st Century reader would be entertained and moved by. Also, much to my delight he spends much time in description of the region to the point that you can close your eyes and see it...and along the way, he delves into culture and human fallenness and human beauty as the search for the Messiah is always leading the reader on to the point that you can’t wait to turn the page. One last note, however, the great chariot race has more time in the movies than in the book...it is just one masterful event after another on this journey to discover the real purpose for the Messiah. (approx. 560 pages).

35. THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH, by Thomas Goodwin (1651 and then re-printed in eBook form 2017). Given the tone and continuous nature of Rev. Goodwin this soon became his best known work. He wrote this treatise basically to convince the Church that now that Christ has ascended He is still with us in

Spirit and in truth. He says, *“Now, therefore, to conclude this head: Never fear that Christ's great advancement in heaven should in any way alter his disposition, for this his very advancement engages him the more.”* He continues to remind his readers that Jesus is the same *“today, yesterday and tomorrow”*, because we and the world continue to confound the truth of Christ's work especially now that He has ascended. Between John's Gospel and Hebrews he continues to reveal to us all that is necessary for us to have the assurance that we need in this life as to Christ's on-going involvement in the lives of His children...from forgiving our daily sins to enabling us to persevere through hardship to the enjoyment of the victories that He chooses to give us in this life that we might all the more delight in Him. Using his vast knowledge of Scripture and his great understanding of the doctrines of grace, he misses no opportunity to let us know how blessed we are as God's children. (170 plus pages in paperback and a50 plus pages in eBook).

36. HEAVEN ON EARTH, by Thomas Brooks (mid 1650's, reprinted). As I have said many times...one of the biggest problems with the Church today is our lack of assurance in our faith in Christ. That lack is often been because we all but refuse to be people of the Word. Also, this lack seems to be because we love the world more than we love the LORD. We may love the idea of the Lord, but we do not love His will for our life--which actually communicates a lack of love for this Lord that we profess with our tongues but not with our actions. And also, as Rev. Brooks reminds, there will be days where assurance is not so sure...that's life...some days in bliss other days in the dumps...for the Christian sometimes more often than the non-Christian. Over and over again, Rev. Brooks brings us back to this simple truth, *“It is the very scope and end of the Scripture to help believers to a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. ‘These things,’ says John, ‘have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,’” (1 John 5:13)* One more quote to this point, *“The word evidences truth, it unmasks falsehood; it fights against folly, it opens the God's heart of mercy, and it assures believing souls of eternal felicity. That is a precious word in Hebrews 6:18, ‘God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.’ God has given us his word, his oath, his seal, that our consolation may be strong, and that our salvation may be sure.”* It is this assurance that is necessary for us to bring God glory and to enjoy Him forever. Also, I love this critique of this book given by a contemporary, Joseph Caryl, *“All saints shall enjoy heaven when they leave this earth, and some saints enjoy a heaven while they are here on earth. That saints might enjoy two (read both) heavens is the project of this book.”* (320 easy reading pages...again a free eBook from Monergism.com...YEAH!).

37. U.S.S SEAWOLF: SUBMARINE RAIDER OF THE PACIFIC, by Gerold Frank, James D. Horan, J.M. Eckberg (first printed in 1945, reprinted 2016). Frank and Horan wrote down Eckberg's story after meeting him on a slow train between NYC and New London, Connecticut in 1943. This is a great memoir written from the perspective J.M. Eckberg, chief radioman of the U.S.S. Seawolf, among the greatest submarine raiders of all time. He served on the U.S.S. Seawolf from 1940 through 1943. Between sinking Japanese ships and being depth charged, his and the crew's emotional well-being was held in the balance. These men lived with one constant...change...when it came to the enemy so their daily routines on the “boat” were crucial to their overall sanity for such long tours of engagement. This is a great read for anyone who

would like to understand the world of a submariner...a special branch of the service where most men are not heralded for the sacrifices they make.

38. CARRIER PILOT: UNFORGETTABLE TRUE STORY OF WARTIME FLYING, by Norman Hanson (Published in 1980, re-published for Kindle and eBooks 2016). This story, like the one above, is the story of a dedicated man who in this case was a fighter pilot for the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm, the 1833 Naval Air Squadron...and his bird's eye view of the war from flying off the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious. For his courage and leadership, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. When I saw this book it immediately looked interesting and from the very first pages you are swept into its pace and content...however, it is written by a Brit and some of the phrases and imagery take a bit of searching in context for their meaning...like "trunking" which I believe to be dealing with bundles of wires...and "round-down" which I am still not sure of its meaning. But lest I get caught up in the flying, the reader of this book is also hit with what it is like to live in a war torn free nation being constantly bombarded.

39. CALVIN'S INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Book 1 and 2, by Henry Beveridge w/ introduction by John Murray (1953). This summer I am reading through these once again and am finding how much wealth there is in them that I had forgotten about. Last time I read them through I was attending Reformed Bible College (now known as Kuyper College) getting my BRE. They were interesting then, but I didn't fully appreciate Calvin's part in the Reformation in those early days of my education. I have been reading so many books and treatises by the Puritans and other Reformers that when Dr. David B. Calhoun wrote his latest book, **KNOWING GOD AND OURSELVES: Reading Calvin's Institutes Devotionally** (which I am reading now, as well, and will critique when I finish it in a couple of months) it made sense to me to re-visit this book (4 books actually modeled after the Apostle's Creed). In Book 1, Calvin presents God as Creator and ourselves as a marvelous creation with hints toward the Fall, which is what the first half of Book 2 is about...the fall and then God's amazing salvation through Christ the Son. Dr. Michael Horton has said this about the importance of these first 2 books, *"Our age does not seem to know either the grandeur of creation or the tragedy of the fall."* Calvin's expressive writing enables us to see the grandeur and the tragedy with very little problem. He is even willing to take on many of the beloved early Church Father's and call them out for their inconsistency in the early days of theological compilations. There is one thing that I had forgotten for sure about these first 2 books that I believe would be very helpful in one of today's on-going discussions...in chapters 16-18 in Book 1 he deals exceedingly well with the discussion of how God is NOT the author of sin and how the Scriptures don't let us in anyway conclude Him to be so...even in His sovereignty. (459 slow read pages in this older form, but well worth a first look or another look).

40. FINISHING OUR COURSE WITH JOY: GUIDANCE FROM GOD FOR ENGAGING WITH OUR AGING, by J.I. Packer (2014). Dr. Packer has been producing thought provoking books for decades and this one is no slouch even if it is pint-sized in comparison with many of his other published works (112 pages). As you know, I like reading these "end of life" works to glean from these giants of the faith parting words that can keep me moving forward especially as I get older. Dr. Packer was 87 when he wrote this book...he is now 91 and still doing interviews and writing articles. His point in this book is very simple: don't let the culture ever dictate to us what we should be doing with our lives. As Christians, we need to remember (Billy Graham said it

first) that there is no retirement in this life. The culture tells us to slow down take it easy and “enjoy” our retirement...one would like to think the culture cares about us...but it doesn’t so as Dr. Packer reminds, if you can do for the LORD, then do it! (Not his words of course.) Dr. Packer says it this way, *“The readers whom I am addressing, as I indicated at the outset, are Christian seniors in or near my own age group. They became Christians in youth or early middle age and have been believers for several decades. They appreciate that learning to live with one’s old age is a spiritual discipline in itself, and they are reading this book in hope that it might help them there.”* I love this, “old age is a spiritual discipline in itself...”, the culture says our work needs to cease...Packer is saying it is a spiritual discipline which means we need to keep working at it. This is a book that every “older” Christian needs to read...so they can push out the crazy-headed thoughts of our culture. This is short enough that you don’t lose too much of your precious time in reading it ;) ...but the benefit might set you back on a path of productivity for the Lord and His church. This book probably ought to even be read by those approaching middle-age to prepare themselves for the inevitable.

41. TAIL GUNNER, by Squadron Leader R.C. Rivas DFC (first published in 1943, re-published 1988, 2016). Yet another English flyers account of ...in the case...a tail gunner as the title says. Unlike **Carrier Pilot**, by another English service man it is rather slow and hard to engage. Where I had issues with the language in **Carrier Pilot**, the story was compelling, while this one is not so much. There were a lot more battle scenes and plane crashes...action from beginning to the end. This book is a bit more contemplative...which I guess one (me) should have expected when you think about the number of hours a tail gunner spends alone to and from a bombing run...totally isolated from his crew mates except for an intercom system that didn’t always work especially in battle. Here are a couple of quotes so you can gather what I am saying..., *“few hours ago I was free and was walking, and could see people and hear them talk!... but now, although there were four men within a few feet of me, their existence felt as remote and unreal as my own body felt. I was conscious of time: one has to be in the air, as accurate navigation is based upon precision of timing. My thoughts were the same. I was conscious of the cold and my own discomforts... not that they worried me; they were part of the job. I could think of my home and my friends... of leave... of games... but most of all of the job in hand. My eyes continually searched the sky—not vaguely, but intelligently and with method—and my hands still worked my turret...”* and this one, *“A boy’s mind should be free and gay, and should not know these horrors... but the mind of a boy who has tasted war is no longer young, but has outgrown his body.”* It is an interesting read in that this “hero” is telling his story of a war that too many have forgotten, and I am sure that the “problem” I have with it is my taste (bad taste) more for exciting events than heady ones.

42. THE NEW BIRTH: REGENERATION. Issue #202 of the Free Grace Broadcasters booklets compiled in 2016. This book covers some of the assorted works of William Plumer, Octavius Winslow, A.W. Pink, John Gill, James Buchanan, J.C. Ryle, John Owen and Charles Spurgeon on the necessity of regeneration and the means God uses to effect regeneration in His elect. The material starts out defining regeneration from Scripture, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3)...and then it proceeds with some of the best materials that anyone could pick up to see the need for regeneration being accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit by the means of God’s own Word faithfully proclaimed by faithful ministers of the gospel. There is little to nothing left for the mind to imagine as these men

faithfully and skillfully, in short treatises, prove the point from Scripture and the illumination of the Spirit. Great stuff and it is free on line from through www.chapellibrary.org . A person can find so many sound doctrinal works from these free eBooks.

43. THE OPERATOR: FIRING THE SHOTS THAT KILLED OSAMA BIN LADEN AND MY YEARS AS A SEAL TEAM WARRIOR, by Robert O'Neill (2017). This book is stirring in so many ways concerning the work of a Seal Team member who served in over 400 counter terrorism missions. This book begins with Rob's early days from Butte, Montana to his leaving the service in 2012 after so much personal struggle concerning leaving his teams. He talks of having been a part of the top 3 main media stories...the rescue of Marcus Luttrell and Captain Richard Phillips who had been abducted by Somali pirates, and later the announcement that he had killed Osama Bin Laden. In these pages he describes in great detail the arduous task of becoming a seal and then being chosen for a Seal Team along with how the military is seeking to ensure that more can be graduated and deployed, since the Seals are arguably the most prepared, most intelligent and most lethal part of our military arsenal... maybe of all military arsenals in the world. He does however, use a lot of blunt vivid and plain language that might offend those with weaker constitutions for such talk. I am not always sure why this much language needs to be used to describe certain details. As has been said by others...even if this book hadn't culminated in the take down of Osama Bin Laden it would still be an interesting read by someone who put their life on the line for us and them...he never questions the reason he gave up so much of his life, though he does wonder still, "I've had many moments when I have wondered if being the one who killed Osama Bin Laden was the best thing that ever happened to me or the worst. I'm still trying to figure that out."

44. GODLY MANHOOD, booklet by Free Grace Broadcaster Issue 192 (2016). This booklet contains biblical messages and excerpts on marriage and family from Samuel Lee, *The Conversion of Family Members*; *A Godly Father's Anger*, by John Gill; *How True Manhood is Restored*, by Charles Spurgeon; *Husbands, Love Your Wives*, by William Gouge; *The Nature of an Upright Man*, by Richard Steele, *Signs and Character of a Godly Man*, by Thomas Watson; *Threats to Godliness in Young Men*, by John Angell James; and *True Godliness Described*, by Benjamin Keach. This little booklet puts the reader in contact with authors that every Christian needs to read...as much for their defense of the faith to their defense of biblical marriage and godly manhood. When talking about the need for family members to be converted Samuel lee makes this statement, "*Teach their conscience to blush, as well as their cheeks, that they from an inwrought principle may avoid the evil and do the good.*" Charles Spurgeon weighs in as well with, "*If your household is not the better for your Christianity, if men cannot say, 'This is a better house than others,' then be not deceived—ye have nothing of the grace of God... Carry out your godliness in your family. Let everyone say that you have practical religion. Let it be known and read in the house, as well as in the world. Take care of your character there; for what we are there, we really are*" Thomas Watson exhorts us, "*Who is the godly man? For the full answer whereunto, I shall lay down several specific signs and character of a godly man. The first fundamental sign of a godly man is a man of knowledge: 'The prudent are crowned with knowledge' (Pro 14:18). The godly man is a man acted by faith. As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature and inoculates us into Christ. Faith is the vital artery of the soul: 'The just shall live by faith' (Hab 2:4). Such as are destitute of faith though they breathe, yet they [lack] life. Faith is the*

quickener of the graces; not a grace stirs, until faith sets it a-work. ” This is good stuff and well worth the read and most messages can be read in one setting at a time.

45. SLAUGHTER, by Elmer Kelton (1994). This is a short series (2 books) that looks at the coming to the end of one way of life and the beginning of another. We begin with a Comanche hunting party looking for the buffalo...their life blood and finding the buffalo killers having gotten there before them which is the beginning of the end of their life style...for without the buffalo the Comanche people will either go to reservation or die...either way death of their lifestyle is inevitable. But, along with this story of a dying lifestyle is the beginning of another as some of those from the buffalo hide business get weary of this and seek to begin a new life with many twists and turns and so much action between Indians and the white men to keep his readers in suspense throughout the book (350plus pages).

46. THE FAR CANYON, by Elmer Kelton (1994). This book continues the story of a dying culture and how the lead Comanche comes to grips with this truth while all along Jeff Layne (the leader of a small rag tag group seeking a different life from the dying business of buffalo hides) is searching for his future...his new lifestyle as a cattle rancher always looking for the Far Canyon...the place where his heart is settled most. He in fact goes to his original home and realizes that it is not home any longer. With many twists and turns come in this book as well that involve the main characters of Crow Feather (the Comanche seeking to hold on to a dying lifestyle) and Jeff Layne looking for “home”. Both are never aware of how their stories intertwine but Kelton’s readers are...as each seek a new “home” unlike their old home.

47. BARBED WIRE, by Elmer Kelton (first published in 1957, this publishing 2006). This is yet another story of struggle in the harsh ground and era which began to usher in fences in Texas. Doug Monahan simply was trying to eke out a living after losing his own ranch in South Texas brush country... a cowboy...now putting up fences...a real contradiction on one hand but also a realist on the other. This, of course, places him and his work crew in the cross hairs of a powerful rancher that totally believes in “free range” ranching. At another time, Doug would have been an ardent proponent for free range but now as times change and more smaller ranchers and farmers come in they need help in keeping the cows off their land from other ranches. They all determine that fencing is the best way for everyone to live well except for the big “free range” ranchers, especially, the powerful Captain Andrew Rinehart...when he spoke everyone jumped except Doug...which causes the bulk of the conflict that drives this exciting story to its end (400 plus pages). I realized when I finished this book that I had finished Elmer Kelton’s entire collection of books that deal specifically with the 19th century struggles for the West. I will have to begin re-reading them....soon!

48. THE MAN WHO RODE MIDNIGHT, by Elmer Kelton (1987). I love this forward to this story: *“West Central Texas hasn’t changed much in the nearly seventy years Wes Hendrix has been a cowboy. It’s a hard land, a land that gives only as much as a man’s willing to put into it. And Wes has always put everything he’s had into it...he has no other way. Now they want to take his land away, and he is set for the biggest fight of his life.”* This is a story set in the 1980’s...yeah you read that right. However, just like so many other of Kelton’s stories once again progress is getting in the way of a man lifestyle and livelihood and he must fight or die trying... it is Texas, after all. The town of Big River wasn’t so big anymore and they needed to

scheme to resurrect the dying community but it would mean that Wes would lose his home and he wasn't going to allow that to happen...for it wasn't just the land but the memories of the land that called him to protect his little piece of heaven on earth...home (a constant theme of Kelton's throughout his works). Along the way Wes is re-introduced to His 20 something grandson and what starts out as a story of conflicting lifestyles between Wes and his grandson Jim Ed ends in a way that will warm the hearts of any reader of western literature (short book only 260 pages).

49. MANHUNTERS, by Elmer Kelton (published 1974, republished in 1994). This book tells a "revised" story of the events that surrounded a true story of one Gregorio Cortez from Karnes County, Texas around 1901. It seems that Gregorio shot a sheriff, like the lead character of our story, which touched off what has been described as the longest manhunt in Texas history. Mr. Kelton's story is loosely based on this actual story and actually ends a whole lot differently than the actual story. This book's main purpose seems to be to show the divisions between Mexicans and Anglos that still exist in one form or another and have since Texas won its independence from Mexico. But, as he says, *"In real life, all the fault, all the bigotry, were not on one side. In a time of unreasoning racial antipathies, there was blame enough to go around."* These are words for us to consider today. This is an excellent story of love lost and integrity and how the best of intentions are not always enough.

50. CALVIN'S INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Book 3, by Henry Beveridge w/ introduction by John Murray (1953). In short, in Book 3 John Calvin presents the internal means of our salvation. He presents at length the redemptive work of Christ, our mediator, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who creates and unites believers to Christ. They/we receive the double benefit of justification and sanctification...acceptance by God and renewal of the image of God in man. You see as he says...having the knowledge of Christ is no benefit unless we are united to Him by the work of the Holy Spirit. In union with Christ believers are justified, sanctified and ultimately glorified. The lengthy section on justification is a scholarly work but it does not take a scholar to understand it. He writes to the King but he writes in such ease of language that he is even more persuasive than Paul in the pages of the New Testament...anyone could read this that is united with Christ and understand his arguments concerning this most important of doctrines. The length might dissuade some today...but it is much shorter in scope than Luther or other Reformers on this subject. His argument concerning sanctification should be required reading for it alone among the greats come to us unencumbered by verbiage. And you have to love the brevity with which he approaches the End Times in the last chapter of Book 3...chapter 25 while speaking of the End Times seems to wrap up all that he has said up to this point in the first 3 Books of the **Institutes** (approx. 276 pages).

51. THE LORD'S DAY, written and edited by Free Grace Broadcaster (2015). In this issue we meet such people as A.W. Pink, J.C. Ryle, Thomas Boston, B.B. Warfield, A.A. Hodge, Ezekiel Hopkins, William S. Plumer, Thomas Case and Jonathan Edwards. The first thing you notice after reading the small treatises written by each of these godly men is that even though their writings span 3 centuries, the message concerning the importance of the Sabbath for God's people and for the glory of God is the same. God's truth is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and that is even clear in these works. Now some of them are obviously stricter Christian Sabbatharians than others, but all seek to maintain the sanctity of the Sabbath taking us back to it being a creation ordinance so we do not forget that it was with God and His people

from the beginning. While the ways of keeping of the Sabbath/ Lord's Day are on display they are not the center of any of these messages. That which is at the center is God's glory and God's giving the Sabbath to man so that we can begin in this life to experience the Sabbath rest that God proclaim on the 7th day of creation...with the ultimate purpose for us to give Him glory for all things. This is free from Free Grace Broadcaster, published by Chapel Library with the expressed purpose; *"To humble the pride of man, to exalt the grace of God in salvation, and to promote real holiness in heart and life."*

52. THE JERSEY BROTHERS, A Missing Naval Officer in the Pacific and His family's Quest to Bring Him Home by Sally Mott Freeman, (2017). This was an extremely moving read. I slowed down and read this over the course a few months because the story was so engaging and riveting that I knew I could sit down and consume it without capturing all of its content...a content of such import that it is unfortunate that many today who are questioning the greatness of this country and its military would do well to read. For within these pages we see the story of 3 brothers who each had an important part to play in the Pacific theater of WW II...and woven in the midst of these events is the constant search for a younger brother who was captured by the Japanese after the fall of Manila and the fall of Corregidor. All through the book we see the brothers and their mother as their stories are told from where they are as they perform their tasks while all along seeking to find the youngest brother who had been deployed to the Philippines because that was the "safest" part of the War. We read of Roosevelt's "war room/ map room" we see and feel many of the engagements from the tower on the USS Enterprise as it begins its long trek across the Pacific as we won back what had been taken from us and we meet the youngest brother in the camps and in the jungles as he suffers through his long interment in Japanese POW camps from the Philippines to Japan. It doesn't go into the specifics of Japanese atrocities like such books as **FLYBOYS** or even George H.W. Bush's book **41** but it does speak of how aghast the American public was at the revelation of these. Will Barton be found? Will he be brought home? These are the 2 questions that are woven through a well-researched and well told account of these brothers, told after 25 years of research by one of the brothers daughter...Sally Mott Freeman. Over 600 pages of wonderful read...you come away feeling as if you participated in this families search.

53. CALVIN'S INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Book 4, by Henry Beveridge w/ introduction by John Murray (1953). In **Book 3**, Calvin presented the internal means of our salvation...now in **Book 4** he presents, if you will, the "*external means*" by which the Spirit works "*to beget and increase faith in us*" (**Book 4.1.1**). In **Book 3** we saw the great blessings that come to us through our union with Jesus but now in **Book 4** he writes, "*We must firmly believe that by God's generosity, mediated by Christ's mercy, through the sanctification of the Spirit, sins have been and are daily pardoned to us who have been received and engrafted and engrafted into the body of the church*" (**Book 4.1.21**). In other words, Calvin makes the point here that we are not only united with Christ but we are also united to His Church. At the very beginning of this book Calvin recognizes our weaknesses when he says, "*Since, however, in our ignorance and sloth...we need outward helps to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goal, God has added these aids that He may provide for our weakness*" (**Book 4.1.1**). And, just what are these "external means" that God uses? "*...the church, its government, orders, and power; then the sacraments; and lastly, the civil order*" (**Book 4.1.1**). But he wishes to be clear and thorough...which he is...when he says in a long and drawn out presentation of

many of the faults within the Roman Catholic Church along with the Anabaptists and other Protestants by saying in effect, the church and the sacraments are not means by which we get grace but means by which God gives grace to us who are His. Because of all the misunderstanding that abound in the church from the Roman catholic to even Reformers like Luther and Zwingli he gives us the most comprehensive discussion on the sacraments (committing a whole chapter alone on the topic of Infant baptism) as means of grace. Calvin ends the book not with an image of heaven but actually with a discussion of the place of civil government. We must look forward to heaven but in the meantime with live on the earth. And he closes this last book and chapter just as he began the first book and chapter with a call to piety, love for and obedience to God whatever the cost. This has been a great read for me as I once again look at all of these doctrines through the eyes of one who is so carried away by the majesty of God...because of his desire for God's church to glorify Him forever.

54. KNOWING GOD AND OURSELVES, Reading Calvin's Institutes Devotionally, by Dr. David B. Calhoun (2016). This has been an amazing companion to the Institutes these past few months. I took my time in reading these books (along with other books that weren't so weighty) because of their importance and weightiness concerning my on-going growth and walk in Christ. Dr. Calhoun does "little" expositing of John Calvin in the Institutes but actually often allows others to do that...even Calvin himself as Dr. Calhoun quotes from sermons, treatises and commentaries written by Calvin further explaining his positions on these issues. There are also stories scattered throughout that speak of the impact of the Institutes on the lives of people like this one at the end of the book told originally by Jean Cadier from his biography on John Calvin, **The Man God Mastered**, *"I am thinking of the man who said to me a short time ago as he came out of a lecture, 'I have just been converted through reading the Institutes.' And when I asked him to tell me what exactly had been the message which had effected this transformation in his life, he replied: 'I have learnt from reading Calvin that all the worries about health and about the uncertain future which had hitherto dominated my life were without much importance and that the only things that counted were obedience to the will of God and a care for His glory.'"* This book made reading the Institutes again a joy...and the prayers of John Calvin that Dr. Calhoun includes...well, sometimes I think they are the real gem of Calvin for they teach the Church how to be obedient and desirous to care for God's glory.

55. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD, written and edited by Free Grace Broadcaster (2015). With these authors this little booklet captures the joy that comes from God's faithfulness... *The Faithfulness of God*, by A.W. Pink (1886-1952). *God Is Faithful Because He Is Unchangeable*, by Edward Pearse (1633-1673). *God's Faithfulness in Afflicting His People*, by Charles Bridges (1794-1869). *The Righteous Man's Refuge—the Faithfulness of God*, by John Flavel (1630-1669). *The Saints Hiding Place in the Evil Day*, by Richard Sibbes (1577-1635). *God's Faithfulness from Generation to Generation*, by Thomas Manton (1620-1677). *God Will Fulfill His Word*, by Charles Simeon (1759-1836). These articles remind believers of what we have a tendency to forget...God is always faithful to Himself ...to His promises and to His people. These are each men worthy of our time and study...one of my personal favorites is Richard Sibbes not only because his is an easy reading style but also because he speaks to the heart of his readers and clearly presents the word of scripture. These little booklets from this source are and can be a great source of comfort, hope and strength for all who read them. (50-60 pages)

56. THE RANGER WAY: LIVING THE CODE ON AND OFF THE BATTLEFIELD, by Kris “Tanto” Paronto (2017). This has been an interesting read. I thought it was going to be mostly about the September 11, 2012 raid on the consulate in Benghazi and that is in there but it is mainly a self-help book...and my guess is he would want it to be considered a “Christian” self-help book. (This, if I am not mistaken, is an oxymoron.) Kris is very open with his faith which has a bent towards universalism, but he also believes that Christians and Muslims serve the same God which is unbiblical in too many ways to recount here. Even with those negative opinions (and there are others) what he does well...which **IS** the purpose of the book is breakdown the Ranger Creed into a workable and measurable ethic for people to live by if they wish to have success and happiness. This Creed is a remarkable code for men to live by. It is all about “TEAM” and leading the way. Both are good reminders that even a warrior can be a servant/leader as each strives toward the mark that is their code. Personal success is based on the team’s success and realizing that obstacles are only thins to be conquered. It is a good read...better than hearing him speak but there is not enough about his faith and how that is the strength at the end of the day that enables him to endure and complete the mission.