

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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**This Past Week:**  
Worship-27  
Wednesday-12

**For meditation:**  
**Ecclesiastes 9.11-12**  
March Madness is a good time to be reminded that the higher-seeded team doesn't always win. Why is faith more dependable than natural ability or overwhelming force?

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *found in my reading . . .*

“There are centuries of paganism yet in many lovely Christian souls—paganism so deep, therefore so little recognized “ (George MacDonald, *What's Mine's Mine*, 125).

Reading this reminded me of 2 Kings 17.41, “So these nations feared the LORD yet served their carved images; also their children and their children’s children.” *They feared Jehovah but served idols.*

How do you do that? In reality, you can't. No man can serve two masters; true religion and idolatry are mutually exclusive. But God's people sometimes convincing themselves that being like the world doesn't threaten or affect our relationship with God.

Paganism was polytheistic; instead of one God (Eph. 4.6) there are many. There's Mammon (money), Aphrodite (beauty), Eros (pleasure), Mars (power, might), Bacchus (drink, drugs), the Muses (arts and science), etc. Like Ahaz, there are times we're tempted to pay lip service to any god we think can help us get ahead (2 Kgs. 16.10).

But paganism comes at a high price. It strips us of our rationality, decency, and humanity. It tells us there are more than two sexes, or that males can get pregnant, and that children should be surgically mutilated. It delights in the killing of babies and the medical killing of the old and infirm (2 Kgs. 16.3,4). It tolerates and protects the Jeffrey Epsteins and will resist every effort to drain the swamp. Worst of all, it makes us oblivious to the fact we've become a pagan.

“Do not be conformed to this world,” “love not the world,” “friendship with the world is enmity with God” ought to take seriously. The life we save may be our own.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

**“If you then, for all your evil, quite naturally give good things to your children, how much more likely is it that your Heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him?” (JBP)  
Matthew 7.11**

**On our best of days, we're evil.** We fall far short of what we're meant to be and could be. In our evil we have the audacity to think evil things about God. If it were up to us, we tell ourselves, babies wouldn't be born with terrible debilities; the Epsteins of this world would be stopped before they could claim their first victim; the swamp would be drained; etc. It's not unusual for us to think God isn't as good as He claims and that in numerous ways, our compassion, kindness, and mercy exceed His.

**Despite our evil, we do good things.** We parents have deep-seated instincts that cause us to act fatherly and motherly toward our children. We, for instance, are discriminating in the gifts we give our children, wanting to only do them good and never harm.

**How much more, then, will the heavenly Father give good things to His children (Jas. 1.17)?** God's virtues infinitely transcend ours. Think noble things of God! If earthly fathers do good to their children, will not the heavenly Father do good to His?

God forgive us the blasphemy of ever thinking otherwise.  
kenny

Sermon: Matthew 5.3

## The incontrovertible condition

22 March 2026

## *A dead give-away*

Nearly twenty years ago, TV journalist Lawrence O'Donnell described Mitt Romney as coming "from a religion [Mormonism] that was founded by a criminal who was anti-American, pro-slavery, and a rapist." O'Donnell, of course, was talking about Joseph Smith. As shocking as you might find his characterization to be, what he said is factually true.

How, then, do Mormons try to convince us to accept a religion founded by a reprobate like Joseph Smith? They tell us to pray about it. Moroni 10.4–5 in the Book of Mormon promises that if you ask God, He will answer and assure you Mormonism is as advertised.

Muslims do the same thing. There are a thousand and one reasons for rejecting a religion that advocates beheadings for infidels and believes the Koran is a divinely inspired book. Muslim scholars try to present reasonable justification for their faith, but their best arguments are full of holes that cannot be explained away.

When backed into a corner, the last resort of Muslims is like that of the Mormons—If you'll pray to God and ask Him if Islam is true, He will inwardly assure you it is."

Thus, wildly disparate religious groups ultimately base the veracity of their religion on the same phenomenon: a subjective—better-felt-than-told—experience.

Imagine meeting someone who claimed to be a poached egg. When you press him for proof of his claim, he says that if you'll pray about it, God will assure you he is as he claims. Would a subjective feeling be enough to convince you? More likely, you'd share Scrooge's skepticism when he told Marley's ghost, "There's more grave than grave about you, whatever you are!"

I can't emphasize enough that Christianity is the only religion that stakes its claim on the objective, empirical evidence of its founder. It is the only religion whose foundational claims have been scientifically verified (1 Jn. 1.1–3). It is on the basis of, not in the absence of, concrete fact that our faith rests.

Whenever a religious group tells you that their faith ultimately rests on some subjective experience, it's a dead give-away they don't have an objective leg to stand on.

kenny

## *Levels of Bible study*

John 20.1–16

John 20.1–16 offers some insight into different ways people read the Bible.

**Mary Magdalene** went early to the tomb the first day of the week and saw something unexpected: *the tomb of Christ was open* (v 1). Without further investigation, she jumped to the conclusion that "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb" (v 2). Her observation was superficial and her conclusion wrong, but she held onto it (v 15). When the Bible is read superficially, the conclusions we reach are almost always wrong.

When **Peter** reached the tomb, he entered it, examined more evidence than Mary, and looked for an explanation (v 6, "saw," *theoreō*, theory) that explained what he was seeing. But he failed to come up with one.

**John** entered the tomb and noted three things: (1) Jesus' body was gone, (2) the graveclothes remained, and (3) the graveclothes were unwrapped.

If you question this last point, can you think of any reason why body snatchers would undress a corpse before carrying it off? Would they do so if: (1) guards were present to prevent Christ's body from being taken (Matt. 28.66), and (2) you were trying to unwrap strips of cloth embedded with resinous gums that solidified over time, cementing one strip of cloth to another? Note that the *handkerchief* (v 7) was *folded*—lit. "rolled up, wrapped together" (Strong's), still in its windings; why would body snatchers take time to leave the head swathing arranged like that? Further, an angel sat at the *feet* and another at the *head where the body of Jesus had lain* (v 12); if the linen wrappings were strewn about the tomb, how could Mary (v 11) have known Christ's body had been placed the space between where the angels sat?

By examining the evidence and reading between the lines, John *believed* (v 8) Jesus had passed through the grave clothes and was risen from the dead.

But none of them thought at the deepest level. Mary's interpretation was wrong, Peter had no interpretation, and John ignored some important evidence available to him (v 9). But the Lord was gracious and patient, giving each time to grow in their knowledge and understanding (2 Pet. 3.18).

May He always do the same for us.

kenny