



Bethany Presbyterian Church

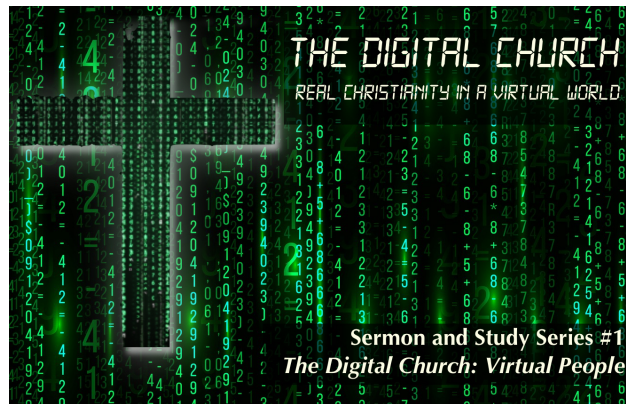
Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

September 13, 2020 – 11:00 am

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost



“Don’t suppress the Spirit. Don’t brush off Spirit-inspired messages, but examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good.”

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD’S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

O God of this and every morning, as I begin this day, call my name; as I step into this day, guide my feet; as I live this day, care for those I love; as I learn this day, teach me your ways. In Jesus’ name. Amen. - From *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 2* (p. 150). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*

AMERICAN FOLK MELODY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AN OFFERING OF PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*(Please take a moment to **socially distantly** share the peace of Christ with your neighbor.)*

* **GATHERING SONG:** *Our God Is an Awesome God*

RICH MULLINS

*Our God is an awesome God who reigns from heaven above
with wisdom, power, and love; our God is an awesome God!*

(Repeat)

* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Disciples and doubters, faithful and feckless,

we are Gods, who welcomes us all.

Followers and those who lag behind, open-hearted and close-minded,

we are the Lord’s, who is always patient with us.

Reconcilers and rabble-rousers, foolish and fearless,

we are the Spirit’s, who encourages us in every moment.

* **OPENING HYMN #479:** *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven*

LAUDA ANIMA

*Praise, my soul, the God of heaven; glad of heart your carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God's praise?
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all your days!*

*Praise God for the grace and favor shown our forebears in distress;
God is still the same forever, slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Sing our Maker's faithfulness!*

*Like a loving parent caring, God knows well our feeble frame,
gladly all our burdens bearing, still to countless years the same.
Alleluia! Alleluia! All within me, praise God's name!*

*Angels, teach us adoration; you behold God face to face.
Sun and moon and all creation, dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace!*

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

AN OFFERING OF SCRIPTURE

1 THESSALONIANS 5:19-24

Holy wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS

Gracious God, we live in unique place and time - a time when church doesn't look the same or even feel the same. We come to church on Sunday mornings, and yet most of the time we don't even leave our homes. We sometimes reluctantly join our cyber church family as we gather for worship.

Help us Lord to be open to new ways to coming to you. Help us to embrace the truth that you reach out to us not only in the buildings of sanctuary, but through the connectedness of the virtual world. Help us to be ready to joyfully accept new ways of worshipping you.

In a world of urls and websites - of Facebook posts and Twitter tweets - of Instagram and Tik Tok - of Zoom and Skype and online school and online church - online shopping and online ordering of food, deliver us from the sin of relying only on the digital to reach you and for you to reach us.

Forgive us when we make gods of our devices, when cyber-connections take the place of in person connections. Help us to use the gift of technology to be better disciples and to build a better church in this unique time and place.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

We rejoice that we worship a God that is present in both the concrete and virtual worlds, and that each of those worlds is open to our presence with our Lord.

We rejoice that even in a time of pandemic and upheaval, that the digital church is alive and well and that God of all worlds forgives us when we fall short. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

* **RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE:** *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah*

TRADITIONAL

*Glory, glory, hallelujah! since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)
I feel better, so much better since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)
Feel like shouting, "Hallelujah!" since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)*

* **SAYING WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE**

EXCERPTED FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

As the people of God gathered in this place, who are we?

We are a community of believers, called by God to WORSHIP, SERVE, TEACH, and SUPPORT.

With the whole church, let us say what we believe. To whom do we belong?

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

In whom do we trust?

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

In what do we rejoice?

With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

OFFERTORY:

*** A DOXOLOGY:** *We Lift Our Voices*

DWIGHT LILES

*We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.
Lord, use our voices; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our lives: they are yours: we are an offering.
All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.*

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

*** HYMN OF THE DAY #281:** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

CWM RHONDDA

*Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty. Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever give to thee; I will ever give to thee.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Word of God Speak*

JOHN HUSBAND

TINA PATTERSON, SOLOIST

*I'm finding myself at a loss for words And the funny thing is it's OK
The last thing I need is to be heard But to hear what You would say
Oh word of God speak Would You pour down like rain
Washing my eyes to see Your majesty To be still and know
That You're in this place Please let me stay and rest
In Your holiness Word of God speak
I'm finding myself in the midst of You Beyond the music, beyond the noise
All that I need is to be with You And in the quiet hear You voice
Word of God speak Would You pour down like rain
Washing my eyes to see Your majesty To be still and know
That You're in this place Please let me stay and rest In Your holiness*

Word of God speak Would You pour down like rain
Washing my eyes to see Your majesty To be still and know
That You're in this place Please let me stay and rest In Your holiness
I'm finding myself at a loss for words And the funny thing is it's OK

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: ***The Digital Church: Virtual People (Photo #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9)***

REV. JOHNSON

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

* CLOSING HYMN #155: *Rejoice, the Lord Is King*

DARWALL'S 148TH

*Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!
God's kingdom cannot fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven;
the keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given.
Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!
Rejoice in glorious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come
and gather all the saints to their eternal home.
Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

* SENDING

Whether we believe or whether we struggle, we are God's.

Let us go out to welcome the doubters and disciples around us.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Let us go to embrace all who have been abandoned by the world.

Whether we are brave or quake at the knees, we are the Spirit's.

Let us go to encourage our sisters and brothers who struggle.

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE: *Revive Us Again*

BART MILLARD / PETE KIPLEY

* *Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WORSHIP Ministry: (Lead Elders: Nancy Purcell and A. J. Campbell)

WELCOME to this service of worship at Bethany Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). Whether you are a member or a visitor we are so glad that you are worshipping with us this morning and pray that this time of worship will be both renewing and rewarding for you. If you have any questions about Bethany, please speak to the pastor or call the church at 336.227.4041.

You can find us online through our website at www.bethanypreschurch.org; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian; or on Twitter by following @bpresbyterian.

“I will show love to those who were called unloved and, to those who were called ‘not-my-people’, I will say ‘you are my people’ and they will answer, ‘you are our God.’” (Hosea 2:23) Bethany Presbyterian Church is a place where the mind is nourished as well as the spirit, and where we affirm the dignity and worth of every person. As we are all created in the image of God, we believe discrimination is incompatible with Christ’s Gospel of unconditional love. While we celebrate our Presbyterian identity, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. We invite conversations that move us to seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit. **Be who you are and be welcome here.**

This morning we welcome our pastor Rev. John W. Johnson back from his 3-month sabbatical! In welcoming John back, we offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Commissioned Ruling Elder Rick Purcell for his leadership and guiding presence over the past three months!

Audio Recordings of each Sunday’s sermons are available through a link on our website, on our Facebook page, or at www.buzzsprout.com/9198. A **Video Recording** of our Facebook Live stream will be available on our Facebook page and on our website.

Resources used in today’s worship:

- *Glory to God* Presbyterian Hymnal
- *The Text This Week* website (www.textweek.com)

Post-Sabbatical Sermon Series: Beginning next today, John will begin a six-week sermon series, sharing insights that he has gleaned through his sabbatical focus of study - The Digital Church. There is also a study component of this series, as those who are interested are invited to gather each Sunday morning during the Sunday school hour for a lively discussion of the book on which this series is based: *“Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World.”* The book is available on Amazon. Here are the themes for each Sunday during the series:

- Sunday, September 13th: *The Digital Church: Virtual People*
- Sunday, September 20th: *The Digital Church: From Connection to Communion*
- Sunday, September 27th: *The Digital Church: Remote Intimacy*
- Sunday, October 4th: *The Digital Church: Empty Minds and Disposable Bodies*
- Sunday, October 11th: *the Digital Church: Googling Prayer*
- Sunday, October 18th: *The Digital Church: Tech Sabbath*

SERVE Ministry: (Lead Elders: Randy Cousins and Tina Patterson)

Our ongoing prayer list is below. Please let the church office know if there are any changes.

Bill Faucette
Jack Cook
Joan Richardson
Teresa Wilborn
Tiffany Tauchren
Jean Berry
Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton

Diane Miller
Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Shannon Russell
Mary Moore
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Mike Sutton
Pete Campbell

John & Ann Sutton
Ruby Martin
Shirley Lane
Ida Whitney
Katherine Turner
Jeremy Harden
Anne McDaniels
Alex Thomas
Stewart Dillard

Norma Proctor
Christopher Bagley
Randy Thompson
Frederica Beatty

Ben Johnson
Grace Johnson
Frank Wrenn
Sylvia Donley

Shelvia Russell
Carol Brooks
Ritchie Fishburne
Janie Holt Clapp

TEACH Ministry: (Lead Elders: Karen Maxwell and Tracey Troxler)

All are invited to take advantage of the several educational opportunities for all ages on Sunday mornings. Sunday school classes begin at 9:45 a.m.

Fellowship Class (Fellowship Classroom – by ramp door)

This class is using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum and lives up to the class name in all aspects of their life here at Bethany.

Children (Upstairs – the really, really green room!)

This class for younger children is using our denomination's *We Believe* curriculum in introducing our children to the faith.

Youth (Upstairs, across from the choir room)

Using a variety of creative curricula, this class explores topics that relate to faith and adolescence.

Join us **each Thursday evening** for a new fall **Bethany Book Club**, as we engage in a discussion of the prominent issue of racism, and our response as followers of Christ. We will be reading and discussing the book ***Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race***, by Debby Irving. The book is available on Amazon. This study will be offered both in-person here at the church and virtually via Zoom. Watch your email for the Zoom link.

SUPPORT Ministry: (Lead Elders: Chip Allen, Ben Russell, and Bill Abplanalp)

Elders of the Month for September are **Karen Maxwell** and **Tracey Troxler**.

Scan the QR code below to access and download our new Interactive Digital Bulletin.



This Week's Calendar:

Today:

- 9:45 - *The Digital Church* study and discussion
- 11:00 - Worship - Sermon Series I - The Digital Church: Virtual People

Wednesday, the 9th:

- 7:00 - Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)

Thursday, the 10th:

- 7:00 - *Waking Up White* book study

Sunday, the 20th:

- 9:45 - *The Digital Church* study and discussion
- 11:00 - Worship - Sermon Series II - The Digital Church: From Connection to Communion

Session

Moderator: Rev. John W. Johnson

Clerk: Karen Maxwell

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

Class of 2020:

Chip Allen
Randy Cousins
Karen Maxwell

Class of 2021:

Nancy Purcell
Ben Russell
Tracey Troxler

Class of 2022:

Bill Abplanalp
Helen Brown
Tina Patterson

bethany presbyterian

love learn serve



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Staff

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson – pastor@bethanypreschurch.org
Director of Music: Christopher Bagley – music@bethanypreschurch.org
Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – office@bethanypreschurch.org
Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org

Elder Emeritus: Bobby Peele

Elder Emeritus: Don Boggs

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Bethany Presbyterian is a Stephen Ministry Congregation

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Our God Is an Awesome God 616

Awesome God

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 2/2 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the lyrics, with chords C, G, D, and Em indicated above the notes. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of the lyrics, with chords C, G, Am, Em, B7, and Em indicated above the notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Our God is an awe-some God who reigns from heav-en a-bove

with wis - dom, power, and love; our God is an awe-some God!

This is a contemporary worship song that first gained recognition on Christian radio and later became a popular congregational song. "Awesome" here is not a trivial expression but carries the meaning of "awe-inspiring" and is based on Scripture (e.g. Daniel 9:4).



Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven 619

(Psalm 103)

1 Praise, my soul, the God of heav - en; glad of heart your
 2 Praise God for the grace and fa - vor shown our fore - bears
 3 Like a lov - ing par - ent car - ing, God knows well our
 4 An - gels, teach us ad - o - ra - tion; you be - hold God

car - ols raise; ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
 in dis - tress; God is still the same for - ev - er,
 fee - ble frame, glad - ly all our bur - dens bear - ing,
 face to face. Sun and moon and all cre - a - tion,

who, like me, should sing God's praise? Al - le - lu - ia!
 slow to chide, and swift to bless. Al - le - lu - ia!
 still to count - less years the same. Al - le - lu - ia!
 dwell - ers all in time and space: Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the Mak - er all your days!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing our Mak - er's faith - ful - ness!
 Al - le - lu - ia! All with - in me, praise God's name!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace!

This adaptation of an older paraphrase of Psalm 103 (see no. 620) is informed by an awareness that much of the received language of religious traditions enshrines social values that obscure the goodness of God, which far transcends all our labels and categories and hierarchies.



1 Thessalonians 5:19-24

Don't suppress the Spirit. Don't brush off Spirit-inspired messages, but examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil. Now, may the God of peace himself cause you to be completely dedicated to him; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept intact and blameless at our Lord Jesus Christ's coming. The one who is calling you is faithful and will do this.



We Lift Our Voices

We Are an Offering

710

F C F C
 We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our
 F C 3 Dm7 F
 lives up to you: we are an offering. Lord, use our
 C F C
 voices; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our
 F C 3 Dm7 F G7
 lives; they are yours: we are an offering.
 Em7 Asus A Dm7 F G Esus E Am
 All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we
 F C B \flat Dm F
 give to you, we give to you. We lift our
 C F C F C
 voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you:
 3 Dm7 3 C
 we are an offering; we are an offering.

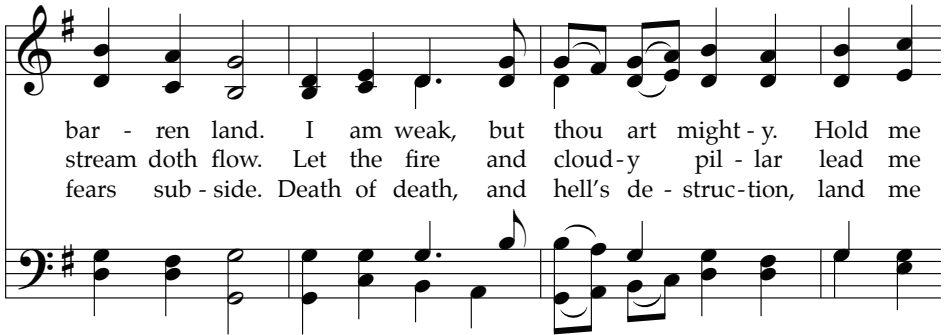
This praise and worship song can best be understood as reflecting on and expanding 1 Chronicles 29:14b: "For all things come of you, [O Lord,] and of your own have we given you." There are also echoes of Paul's appeal for Christians to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).



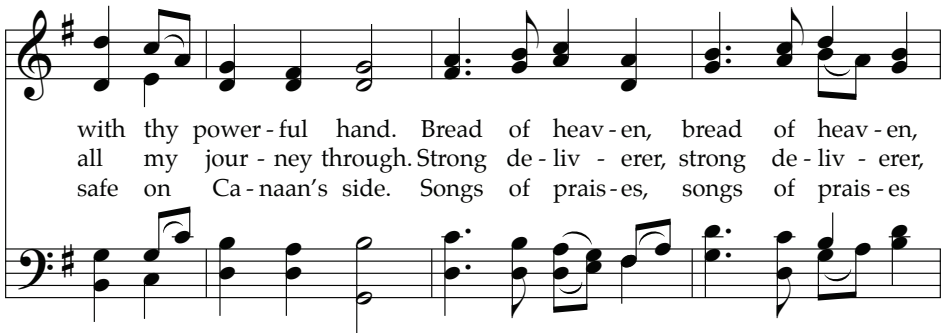
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah 65



1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.



155

Rejoice, the Lord Is King

DARWALL'S 148TH 6.6.6.6.8.8

Charles Wesley, 1746
Descant

John Darwall, 1770
Desc. Sidney Hugo Nicholson (1875-1947)

3. Re - joice in glo - rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

1. Re - joice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King a - dore!
 2. God's king-dom can - not fail, Christ rules o'er earth and heaven;
 3. Re - joice in glo-rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

To glo - ri - fy the saints For their e - ter - nal home:

Re - joice, give thanks, and sing, And tri - umph ev - er - more:
 The keys of death and hell Are to our Je - sus given:
 To glo - ri - fy the saints For their e - ter - nal home:

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!

This tune in a higher key and without descant, 430



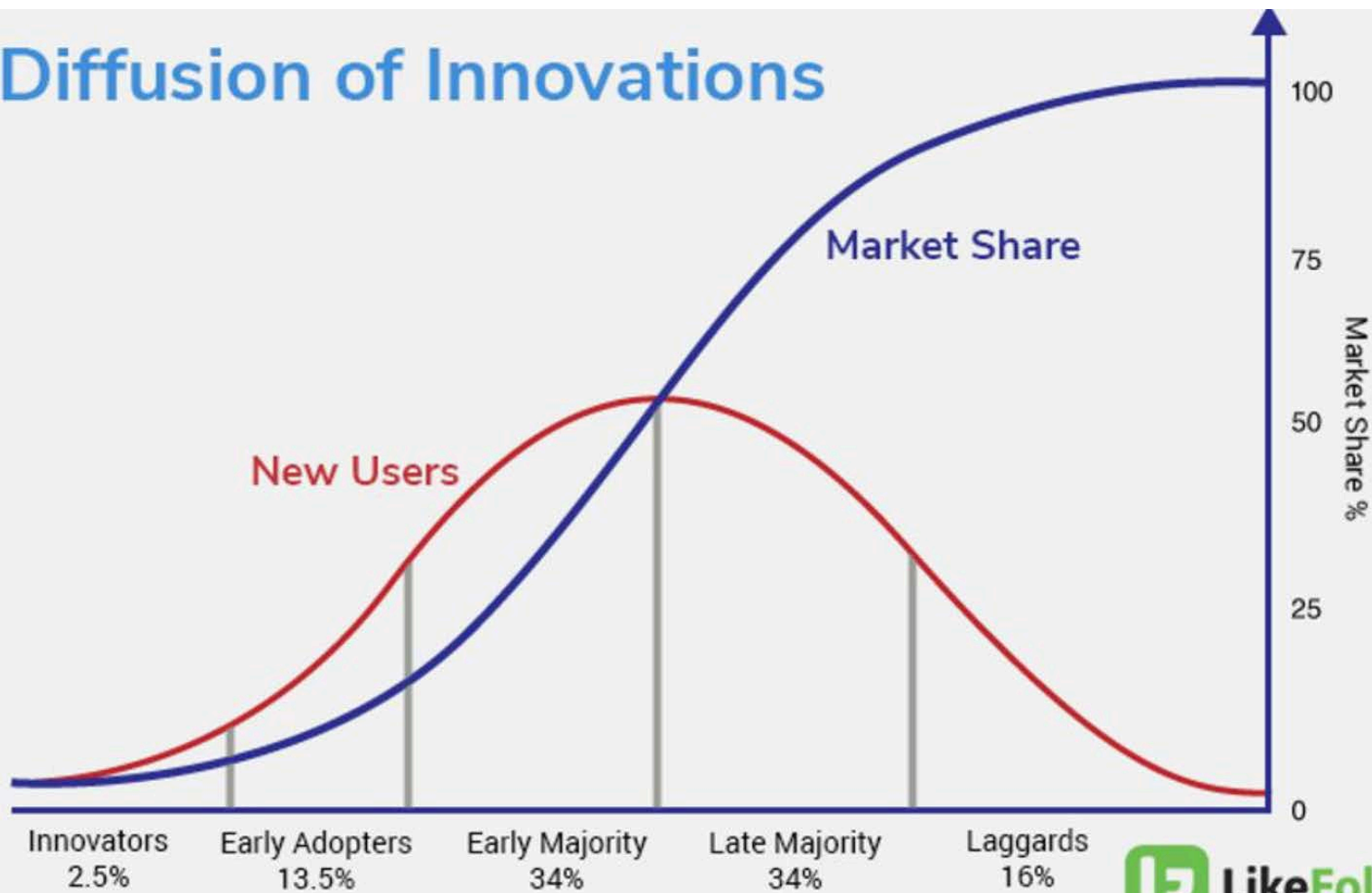
ADAM THOMAS

DIGITAL DISCIPLE

REAL CHRISTIANITY IN A VIRTUAL WORLD



Diffusion of Innovations



“Ev’ry time I look at you I don’t understand, why you let the things you did get so out of hand. You’d have managed better If you’d had it planned; now why’d you choose such a backward time and such a strange land? If you’d come today you could have reached a whole nation. Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication.”



“While millions of little connections happen every day - from friends and relatives to subcultures and fan bases - these connections happen remotely. I can see and hear people thousands of miles away. But I can’t touch using Facebook. I can’t taste a friend’s tweets. And I sure can’t smell a wikipedia entry. My senses are reduced by 60%.



I have a contacts list, but I really can't make contact. A wall of technology isolates me from you, and the more we use the tech, the more comfortable we feel hiding behind it. We develop a dependence on what can only be described oxymoronically as remote intimacy."

- Adam Thomas



“The Word became flesh in Jesus Christ in order that we might see more clearly the connection that God yearns for us to have with one another and with God. The internet offers wonderful opportunities for connection,



but they always come attached with the danger of isolation. Like most things in life, we can't separate the danger from the opportunity; we can only hope to trend toward the opportunity while trying not to ignore the nature of the danger."

- Adam Thomas



“How do the tech’s simultaneous forces of connection and isolation affect our walks with Christ?”
- Adam Thomas



*"It has lasted down through the centuries because it went viral back in the first and second centuries."
- Adam Thomas*



“Paul’s directive warns us against defining the set of conditions by which the Holy Spirit can speak to us. Anytime we develop new media or dream up new scenarios, the spirit will be able to interact with us through the new things. This includes the internet. We just have to pay attention.”

- Adam Thomas



*Don't suppress the Spirit. Don't brush off Spirit-inspired messages, but examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil. **Now, may the God of peace himself cause you to be completely dedicated to him;***

1 THESSALONIANS 5:19-24



and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept intact and blameless at our Lord Jesus Christ's coming. The one who is calling you is faithful and will do this.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:19-24

