

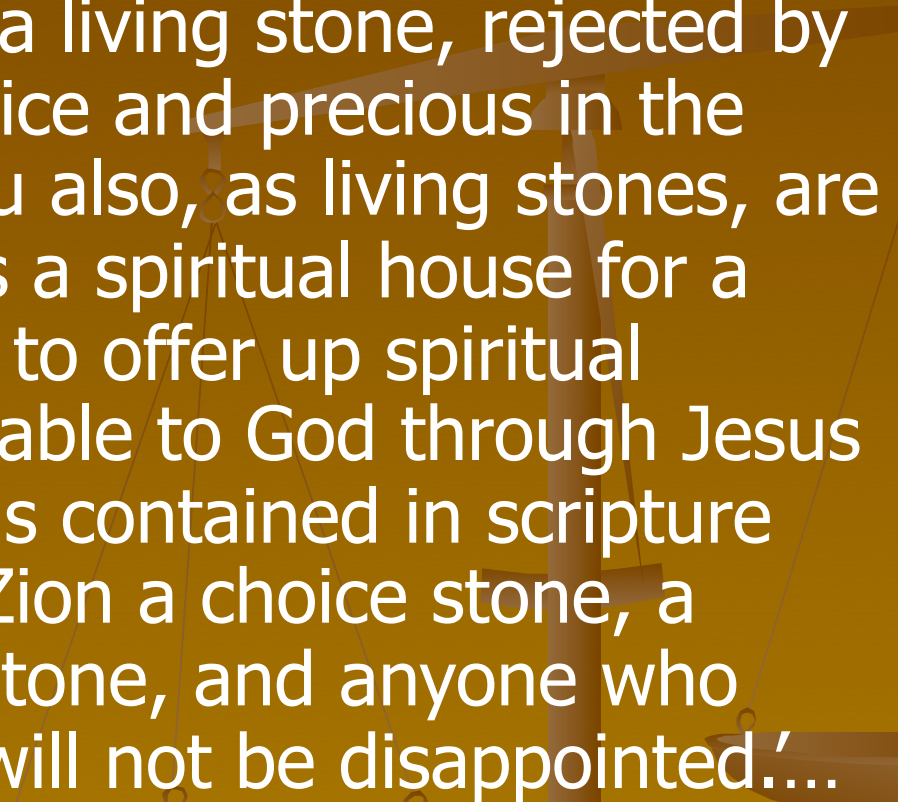
Luther's Priesthood of All Believers



Some Implications for Missional
Congregations in the 21st Century

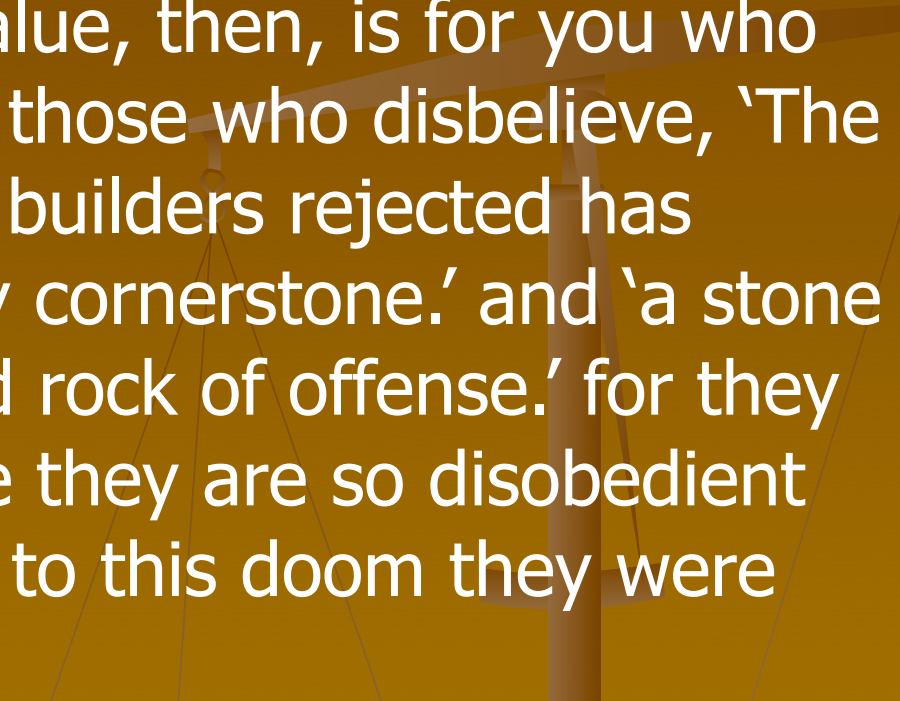
1 Peter 2:4-10

Coming to him as a living stone, rejected by mortals, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in scripture 'Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed!....'



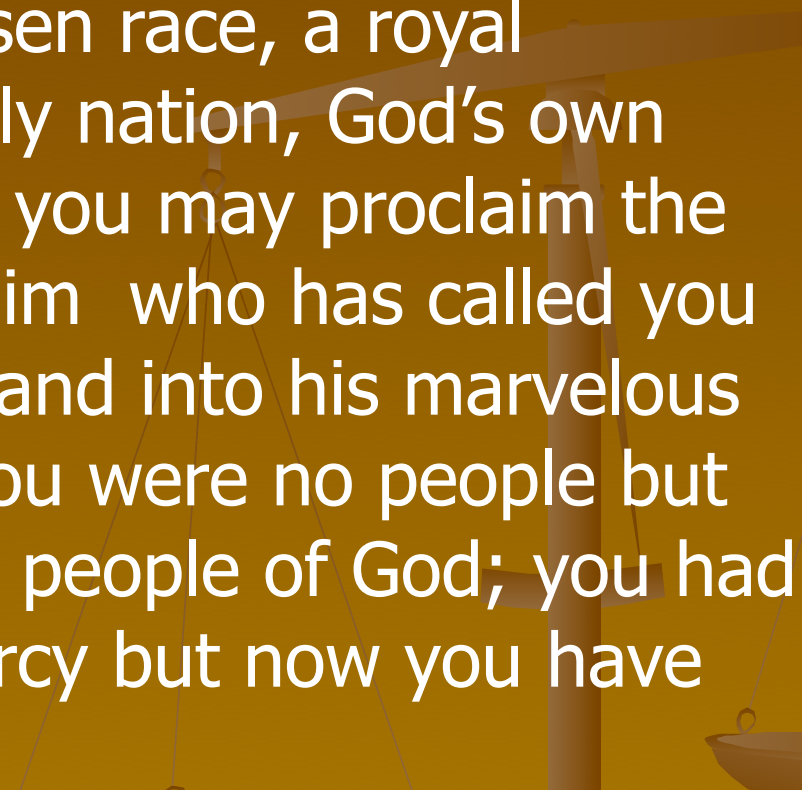
1 Peter 2:4-10 (continued)

... This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the very cornerstone.' and 'a stone of stumbling and rock of offense.' for they stumble because they are so disobedient to the word and to this doom they were appointed....



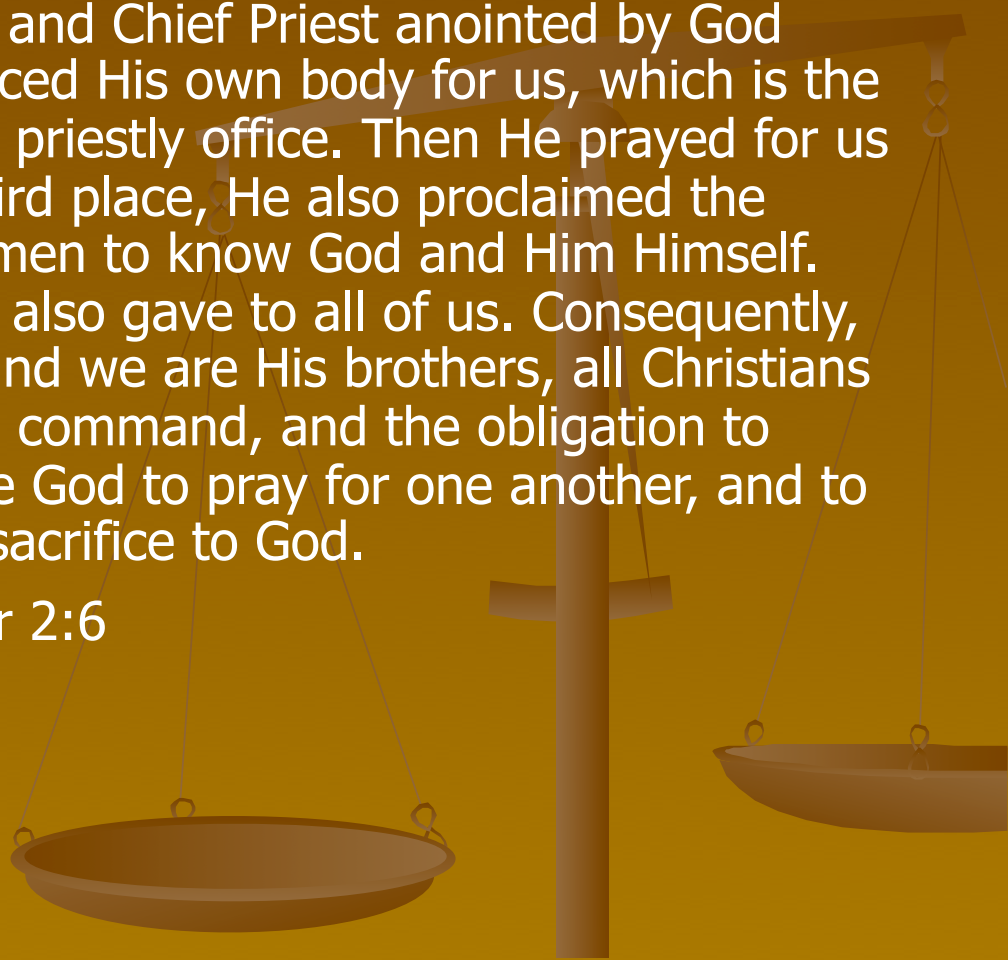
1 Peter 2:4-10 (continued)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light; for once you were no people but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.



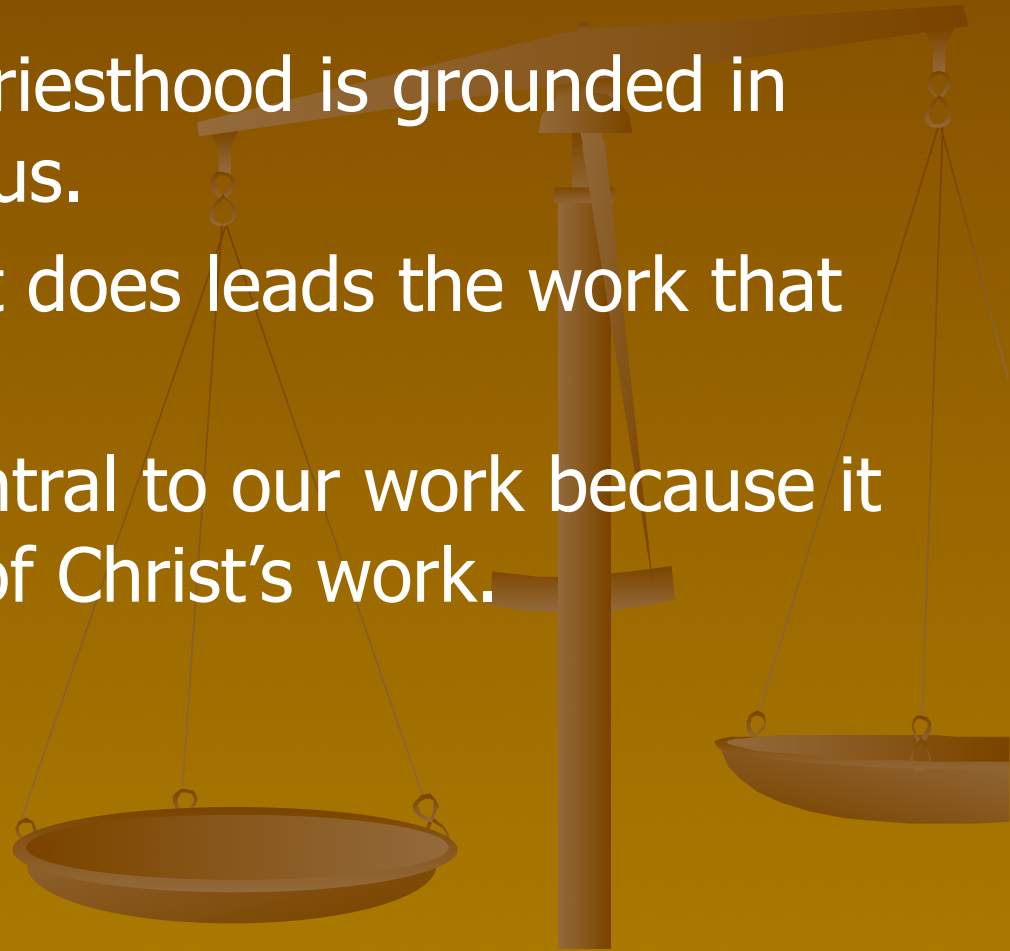
A quick overview of Luther's Thought

- Now Christ is the High and Chief Priest anointed by God Himself. He also sacrificed His own body for us, which is the highest function of the priestly office. Then He prayed for us on the cross. In the third place, He also proclaimed the Gospel and taught all men to know God and Him Himself. These three offices He also gave to all of us. Consequently, since He is the Priest and we are His brothers, all Christians have the authority, the command, and the obligation to preach, to come before God to pray for one another, and to offer themselves as a sacrifice to God.
- LW, Volume 30, 1 Peter 2:6



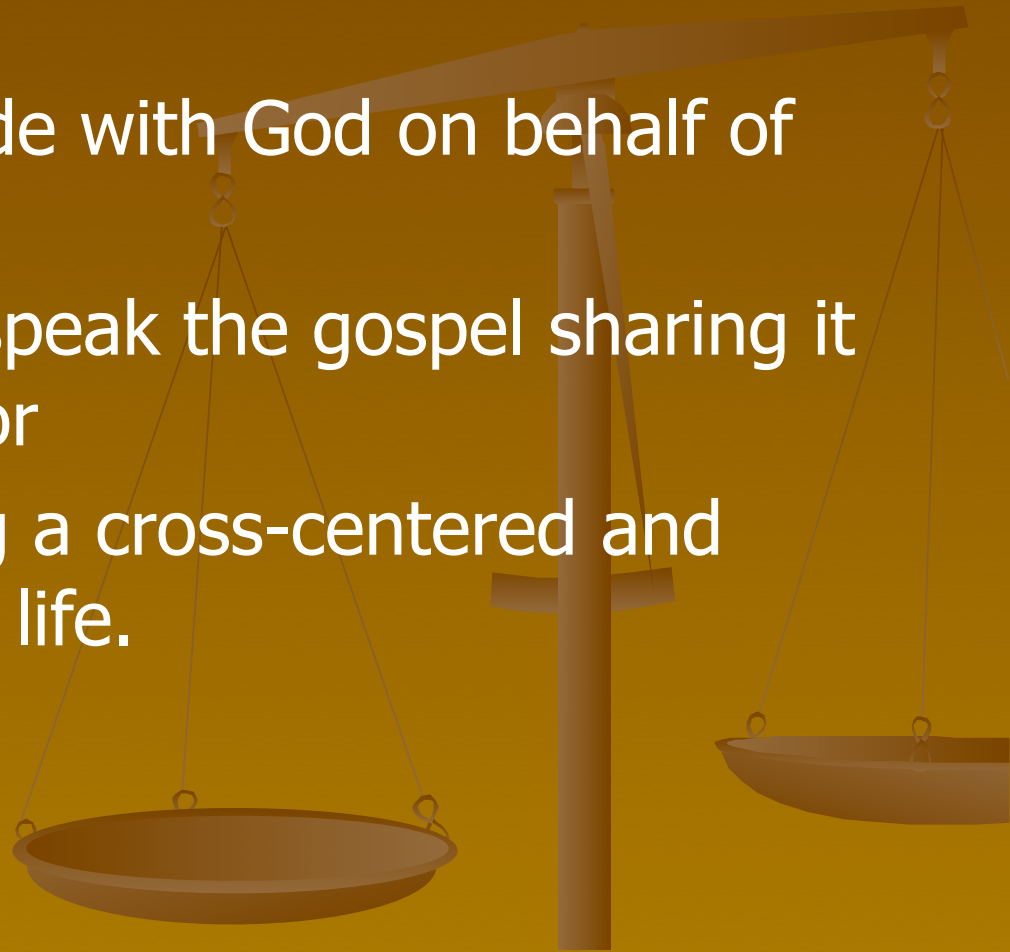
Jesus Christ: The grounding for our priesthood

- Note that our priesthood is grounded in the work of Jesus.
- The work Christ does leads the work that we do.
- The cross is central to our work because it is at the heart of Christ's work.



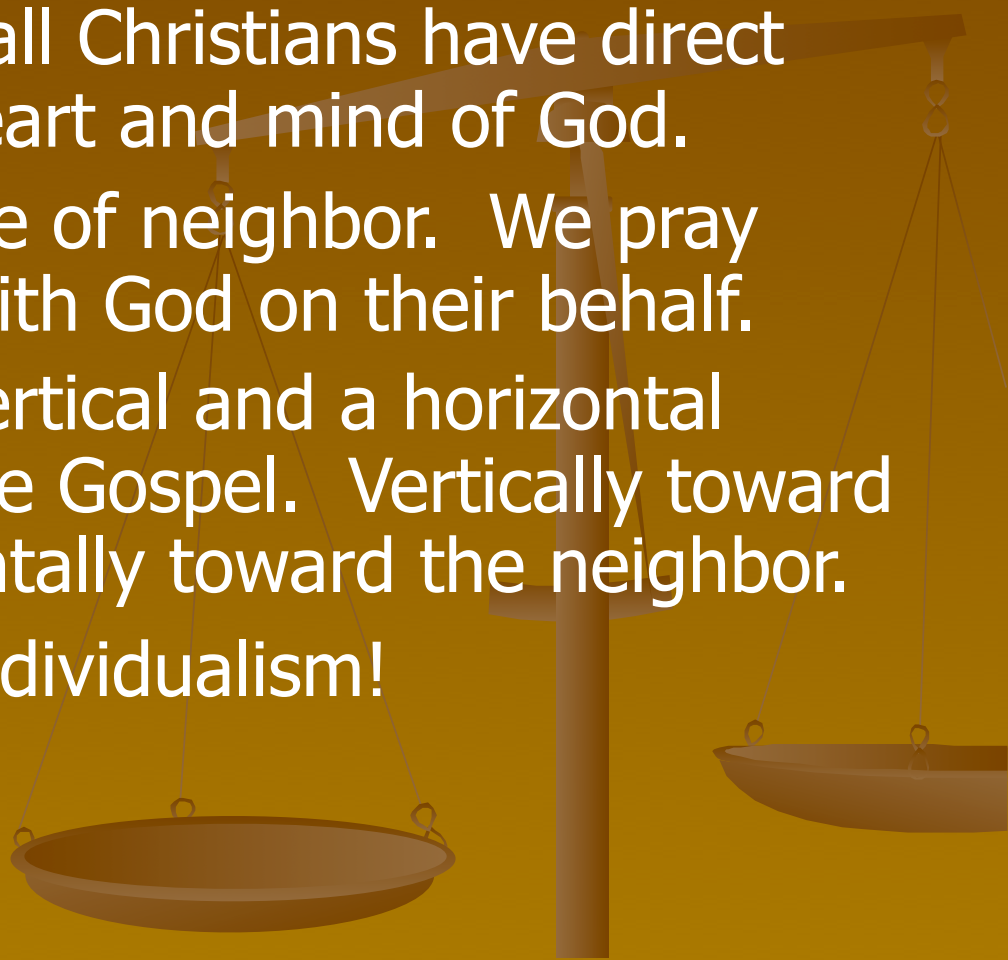
The Three Priestly Functions

- Prayer – intercede with God on behalf of others
- Proclamation – speak the gospel sharing it with the neighbor
- Sacrifice – Living a cross-centered and servant oriented life.



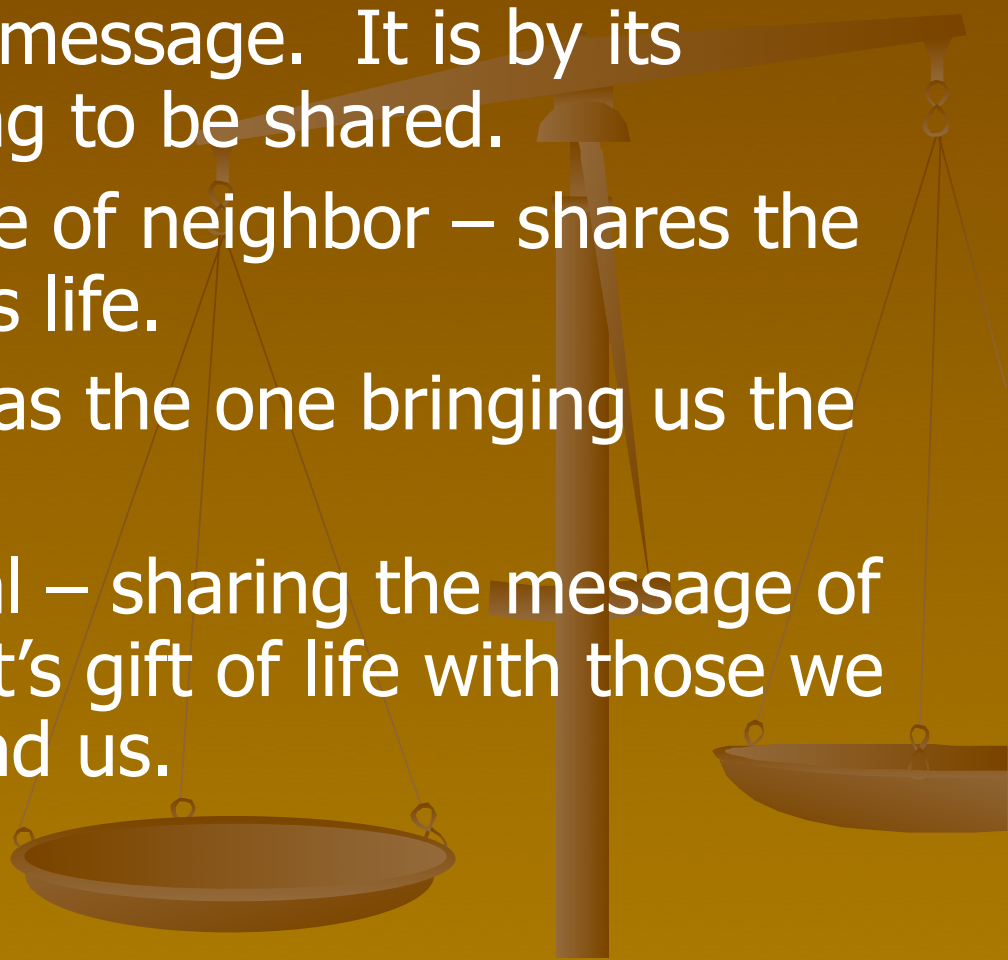
Prayer

- Through Christ all Christians have direct access to the heart and mind of God.
- Grounded in love of neighbor. We pray and intercede with God on their behalf.
- This is both a vertical and a horizontal expression of the Gospel. Vertically toward God and horizontally toward the neighbor.
- Not about my individualism!



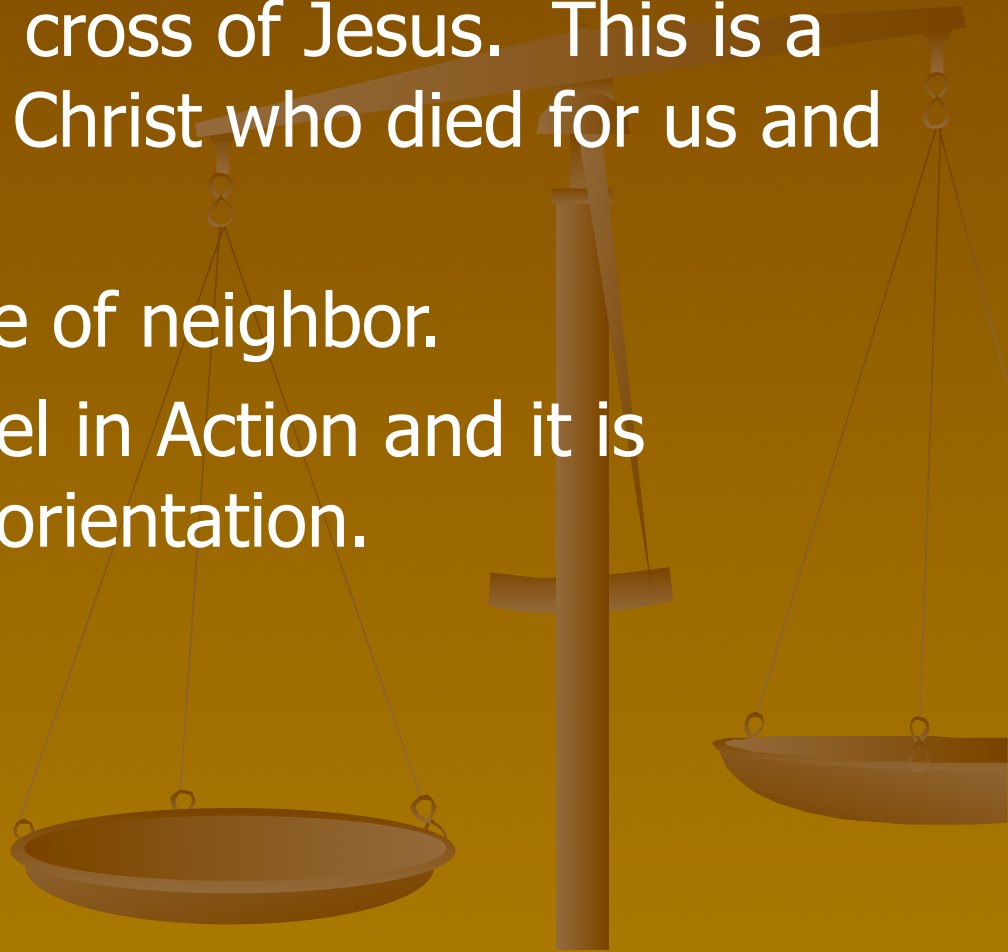
Proclamation

- The Gospel is a message. It is by its nature something to be shared.
- Grounded in love of neighbor – shares the Word that brings life.
- Points to Christ as the one bringing us the Reign of God.
- This is horizontal – sharing the message of Christ and Christ's gift of life with those we encounter around us.



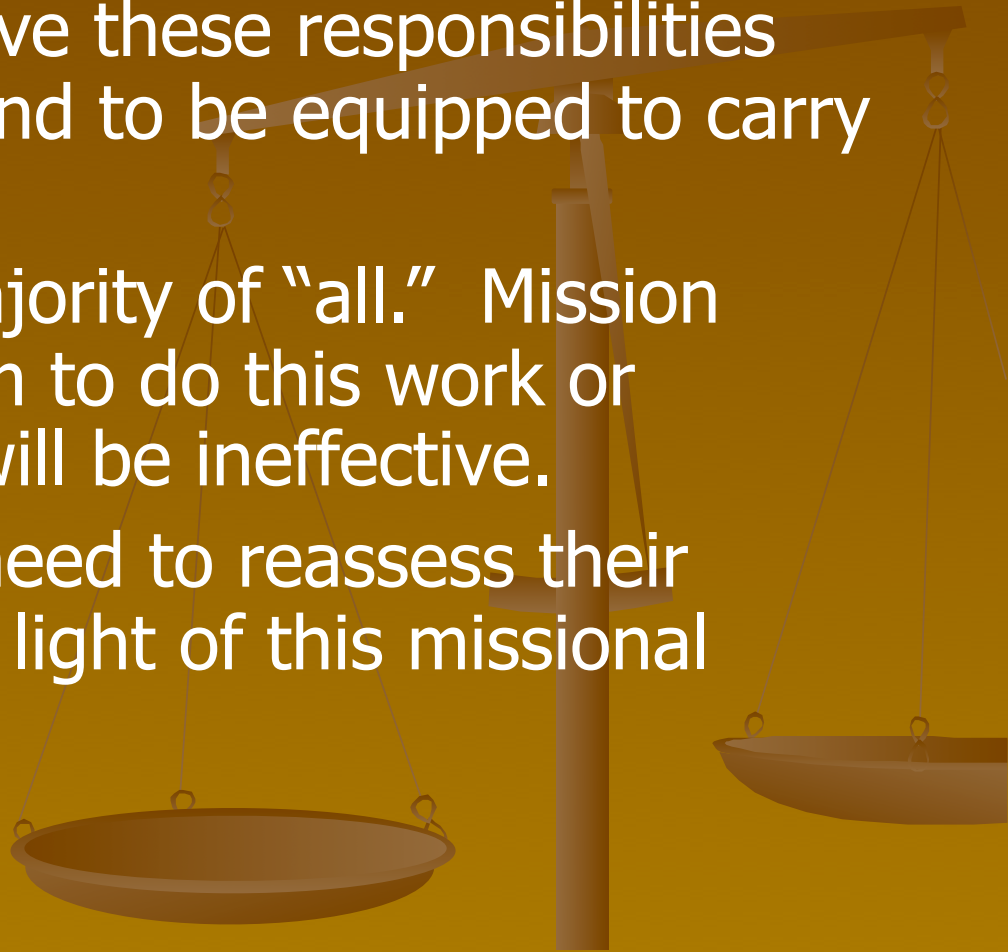
Sacrifice

- Grounded in the cross of Jesus. This is a reflection of the Christ who died for us and is in us.
- Grounded in love of neighbor.
- This is the Gospel in Action and it is horizontal in its orientation.



Implications for Mission

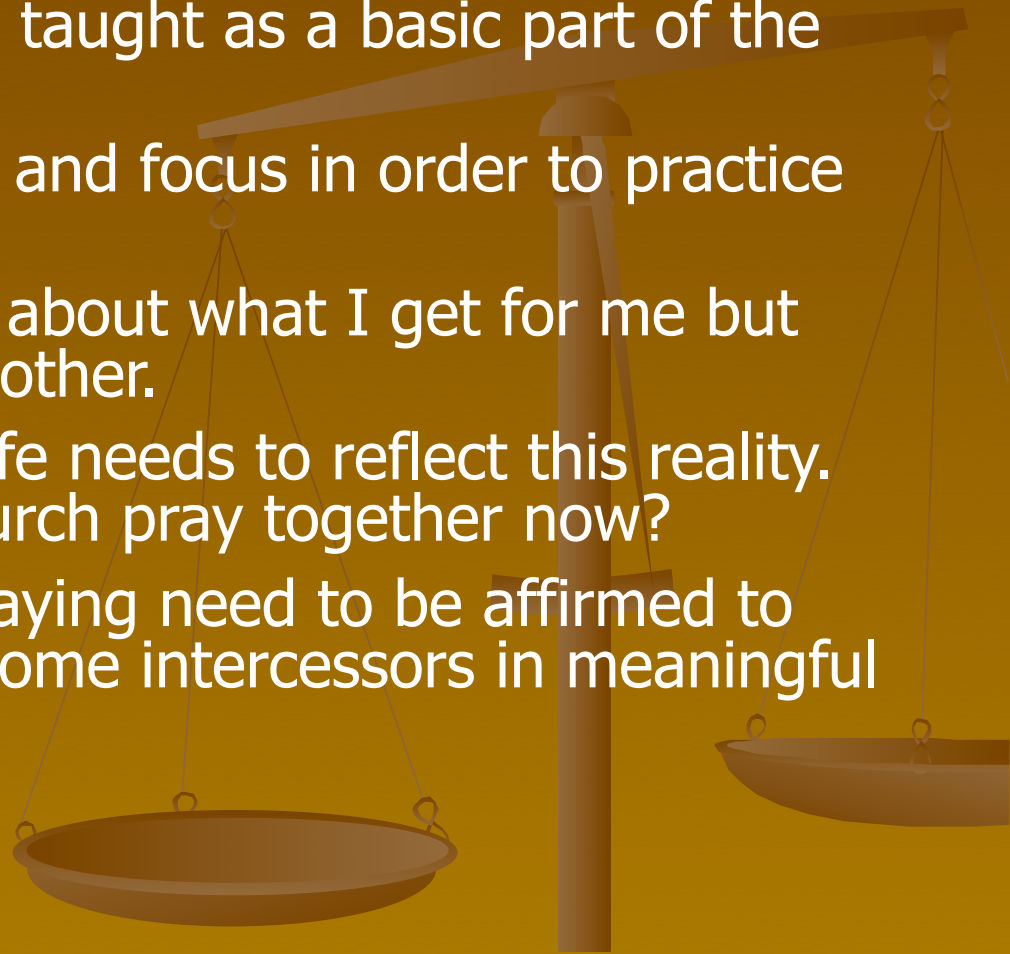
- All Christians have these responsibilities and are gifted and to be equipped to carry them out.
- Laity are the majority of “all.” Mission must equip them to do this work or assume that it will be ineffective.
- Congregations need to reassess their programming in light of this missional work.



Prayer:

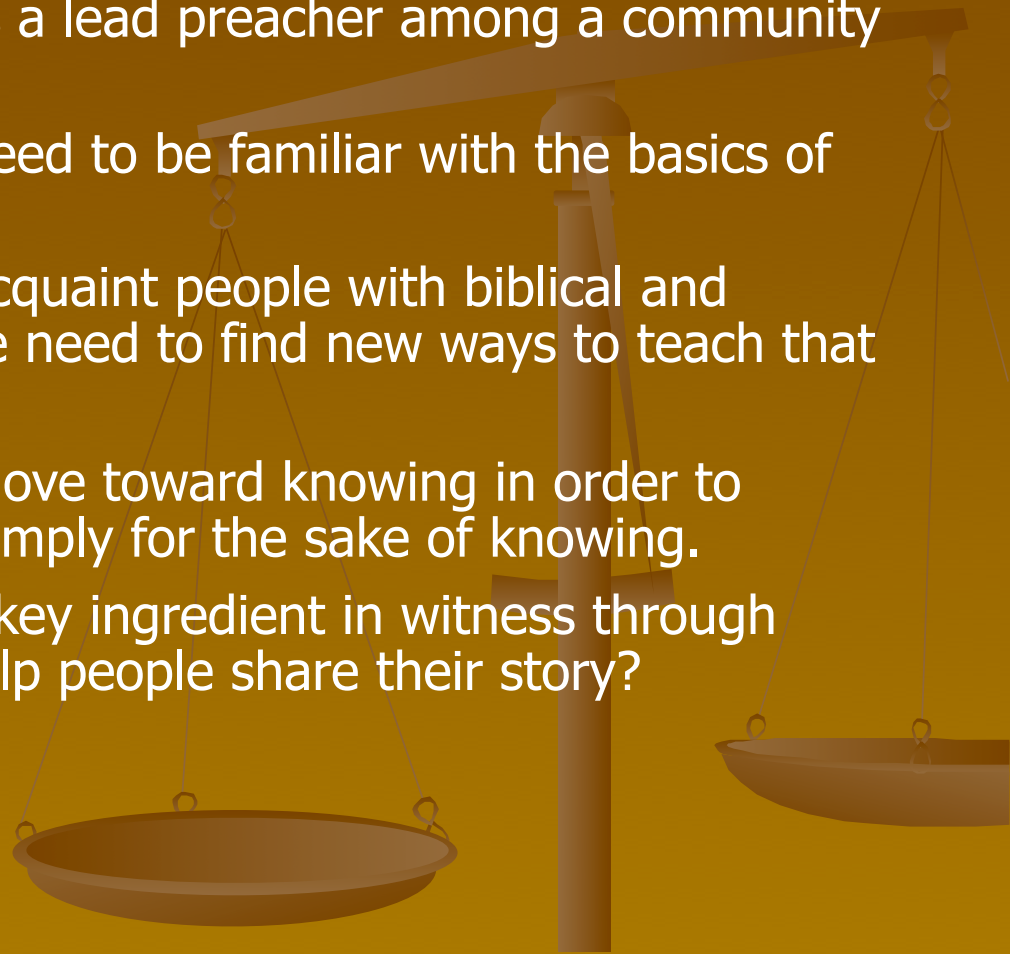
Implications for Congregations

- Prayer needs to be taught as a basic part of the Christian life.
- People need space and focus in order to practice this together.
- Intercession is not about what I get for me but how I care for the other.
- Corporate prayer life needs to reflect this reality. How does your church pray together now?
- Various ways of praying need to be affirmed to help all people become intercessors in meaningful ways.



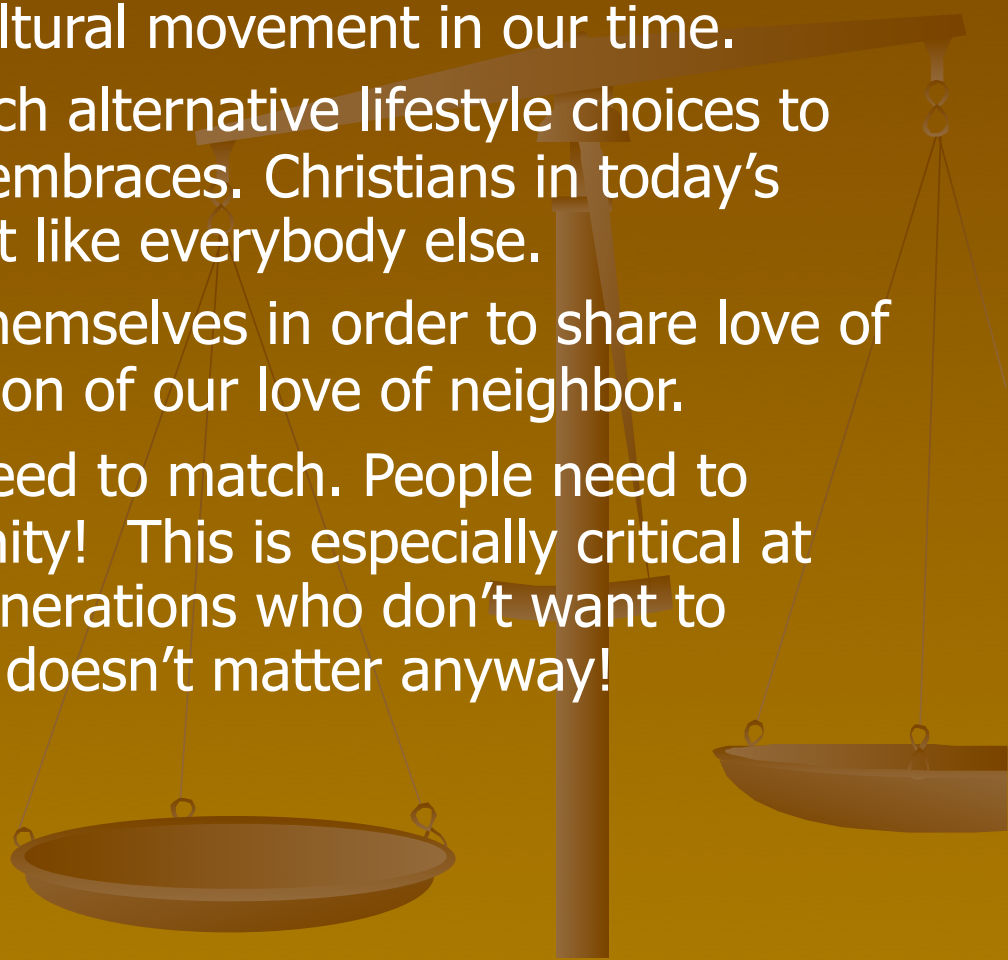
Proclamation: Implications for Congregations

- The preacher/pastor is a lead preacher among a community of preachers.
- Even new Christians need to be familiar with the basics of the biblical message.
- Instruction needs to acquaint people with biblical and theological literacy. We need to find new ways to teach that are helpful.
- Instruction needs to move toward knowing in order to proclaim rather than simply for the sake of knowing.
- Testimony becomes a key ingredient in witness through telling. How do you help people share their story?



Sacrifice: Implications for Congregations

- Church as countercultural movement in our time.
- Church needs to teach alternative lifestyle choices to reflect the values it embraces. Christians in today's world can not be just like everybody else.
- Christians offer up themselves in order to share love of Christ as an expression of our love of neighbor.
- Ethics and actions need to match. People need to learn to DO Christianity! This is especially critical at reaching younger generations who don't want to waste their time if it doesn't matter anyway!



Priesthood of All Believers: Implications for Congregational Mission

- Vocation becomes the medium in which priesthood is lived out. Christians use their vocation as the vehicle for **infiltrating** the world.
 - Congregations train people in the three basics including conscious connections to the world in which they spend their time.
 - Gathering needs to include debriefing – processing how the work of being a Christian is going (groups, fellowship, classes, sermons, etc. need to help this happen).
 - Honor the work publicly – commission and send!
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