

Session Five: Bible Reading Part 2

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Preacher: Tom Tapping

[0 : 0 0] welcome back to gospel growth and we've been talking about disciples growing up in the gospel and the last session if you remember when we began talking about this we talked about the importance of Bible reading and we we try to stress that it's not just about reading the Bible there's more to the just picking up a book and reading it there's also this personal experience of worship that we have when we read God's word to us we get to know him personally he encounters us in deep personal ways and our hearts as we see more of who he is our hearts fall more in love with him and we we want to be more like this God we want to be more with this God we begin to put him first in our lives in more and more ways that are life-changing and we encounter him at all sorts of different levels as we read his word and as we get involved with the Bible so in this session I'm going to talk about a method that we have used here very successfully for reading the Bible hundreds and hundreds of people have done this are busy doing this and it's really helpful and I hope it's going to be helpful for you and the small group that you're all part of as you watch this so we call it community Bible reading the short for that is CBR and it comes out of a thing called

CBR journals which we have here and I think there's many of them available if you wanted one but this process the CBR process is is a way of responding to what you read in God's word so it's not just getting a whole lot of information it's how do I respond to what I've read how does it affect me how does it change my life and the CBR is a gospel-centered approach to reading God's scripture we want to find the gospels in every single page as we read it it emphasizes community it emphasizes relationship not just with God but with one another and it is incredibly helpful to that and it helps us find the gospel every day of our lives we need to feed on the gospel every single day we believe as you believe I'm sure if you're watching this that is the gospel that changes us it's the gospel that matures us and so if the word of God is going to help me in that process and obviously we want to get stuck into that and so for many of us the gospel and uh is something we know is true it's great we're happy when our pastor talks about it uh and often the pastors talk about it a lot talk about the gospel a lot on Sundays but there's more to it than just sitting in a chair and listening to a pastor or watching him online talk about the gospel it's something that we got to know and it's something that we need to incorporate into our own devotional lives and sometimes we do read the bible

I'm sure many of us read the bible from time to time or or even every day maybe you have a rhythm for that and we get some encouragement for ourselves from that or or we learn something new that we didn't know and none of that is bad but there's much more that we can get out of that so we don't just need a nugget of encouragement or some new facts every day we need the gospel every day of our lives to help us on this amazing Jesus journey that we're on in our time in the word or in prayer if it isn't driving the gospel deeper and deeper into our hearts it's kind of just a moralistic exercise that we are participating in and um but but you know you're probably asking the question why can't we just get all this stuff on a Sunday or or uh watching a service online or going to a community community group with a bunch of other people when we study the bible together why can't the gospel just be a weekend thing and the preacher does his bits and we grow and all the rest of it and what we need to understand today the gospel isn't just something that we know about it's actually something that we have to feed on it actually feeds our very soul it feeds our very spirit in fact the bible calls the gospel the good news that we find in scripture it's our daily bread it's our daily spiritual bread that we need every day it brings us a satisfaction and we find god in there and it makes us more holy it matures us it increases our love it creates community around all the truth that it brings to us so hearing the gospel once a week is not really enough to make the bedrock story of our life this good news called the gospel of Jesus Christ this good news that shapes us defines us and makes that make our lives look something like Christ would intend them to look like

this is ever going to happen you need to wake up every day to the reality of the gospel and so here's the fun part there's this four-step prayer that is part of the CBR it's right at the center of digging into the gospel and you find this on every page in the CBR journals and the thing I love about it is that it forces me when I use these four steps it forces me to rehearse the gospel over and over again and the juices from the gospel start to change me and so here's the four steps they're really easy and I'll give you an easy way to remember them it's adoration confession thanksgiving supplication and the acronym for that is the little word acts a c t e a c t s adoration confession thanksgiving supplication and you may have heard of that before it's not a an unknown little acronym that people have used all around the world in different places and that maybe it's helped you in your personal life uh worship as well but there's others of you I'm guessing you think well why that's so random those four things why why are those important how does that help me and I want to say they're not important they're actually very structured and there's a real reason why they are that way and it's the way the gospel is shaped and I'm going to hopefully show you that in a few moments and what we're going to do is open up a passage of scripture in a little bit and let that passage lead our hearts into some gospel growth that will change us as we see this this uh the scripture that I'm going to outline to you so let us go to Isaiah chapter 6 a well-known passage of scripture from verse 1 to 4 and um we'll see how those four little things apply to this it says in the year that king Uzziah died I saw the lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple above him stood the seraphim each had six wings with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet and with two he flew and one called to another and said holy holy holy is the lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory and the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called and the house was filled with smoke so so what's going on here what's happening in this little uh picture that we get and of Isaiah's life this glimpse into heaven as it were well Isaiah's getting a really really big download of how big and awesome and majestic and amazing is this god that we serve and what Isaiah sees causes some things to happen to him and that's what we're hoping that as we read god's word some things start to happen in us and these uh four words are going to help us with that so what does it first of all cause Isaiah to do and it says adoration because he sees the holiness and the beauty of god he gets a glimpse of god of who god really is and he just is awestruck and he begins to adore him he's moved to worship and that exact same thing is our portion every day as we dig into god's word as we look into the gospel when we when we read the bible i don't know about you but often i'm drawn to the bits and pieces that talk about me you know maybe talk about identity and all these kind of things how to be a good man and all the rest of that but first and foremost the bible is about god it's like the curtains are pulled back every time we open the word and we begin to see more and more of this majestic one the true and living god it's about his excellence his love his power his sovereignty and as we read we should notice these things and not stop noticing them but when we do notice them our heart should be drawn into praise and adoration and wonder at who he is if you're anything like me i'm sure you are then your prayers like mine can be very self-focused it's just a list of things that i need and that's my prayer life but we need to change our prayer praying a little bit differently yes it's good to pray for the things that we need god encourages us to do that but our prayers also need to be peppered with many prayers that are lavish in the expression of adoration and praise and wonder at who this god is and so as i read god's word that's what i begin to see the bible leads me to god pulls back the curtain it's like a photo album just page after page of amazing photos of who this god is and my heart is stirred and i begin to worship as we begin to read we look for things that point our hearts to wonder at the majesty and the beauty of god but when we get a proper glimpse of god then something else happens as i 6 5 says and i said woe is me for i am lost for i am a man of unclean lips and i dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts when you see that god is holy you also see very clearly that you and i are not holy we at the total opposite end of where god is and this stirs something again in our hearts and you see it in isaiah it stirs confession i am lost i need your help i i'm a sinner i'm useless i need you god in my life every time we open the bible we should be looking for something about god we we we will we will notice things about him and it'll always remind us that we've fallen short and and that helps humble us especially when we see that every single day it gives us a kind of a humility about how we live life and often in the passages we'll read in scripture will lead us to places of repentance for example you read about david and goliath and and maybe you read that and afterwards you repent because you realize

man you just don't have the kind of courage that david had and used in his life or maybe we read about david and his whole episode with besheba and we repent because we often we start to realize man we just as lustful and selfish and conniving and planning as david was in that moment but what about if you read a passage and it doesn't have some sin in it or something that's wrong that needs to be corrected does that mean we can't repent i i don't think so because anytime you read any passage of scripture maybe it doesn't talk about a sin but it puts him on display oh my gosh there's room for repentance there because you see who he is and who i am and who you are in light of that and there's a moment to repent and say god help me let me help me deal with these things some of those things are going to be big some of them are going to be little but what's more important is that he is big and we are little that helps us in our repentance he is the king we the rebels that helps us in our repentance and this is something we should acknowledge every single day and if we opening the word on a daily basis that will happen to us now our culture is not quick to admit wrong if you just look at you know elections and all sorts of other things and high-powered people and all the rest of it uh on on the tv and in other places you'll see they they don't like accusations and they don't succumb to accusations very easily and we know what their response is as the reporter starts interviewing someone on tv we know the response they're going to dodge they're going to make excuses they're going to say hey no look at that person take the the light off me and uh that's not what we do as christians when we open god's word and we see who we are in the light of who he is we repent someone once penned the sentence says repent birds fly fish swim and christians repent it's part of our daily walk with the god that we love and the god that loves us and if the gospel is being driven deeper and deeper into our hearts we will repent more quickly more frequently more joyfully and more deeper as we go on our journey with the king but that's not where this grid stops we don't stop there god-centered personal uh worship is not a kind of a shame wallowing kind of fest that's going on but once we understand our brokenness the grace rushes in god's grace rushes in and meets us there instead of being woe is me it's like oh wow is me look what's happened god's grace has come towards me looks look what it says in isaiah 6 then one of the seraphim flew to me having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar and he touched my mouth and said behold this has touched your lips your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned atoned for the massive gap between me and god you and god this has just been dealt with this is the grace of a of an amazing god of an amazing loving god that's who god is the grace giver and that's who i am the grace receiver again it stirs up adoration and all the things that we're busy talking about the good news is that god reached out to me he reached out to us in love he forgave me forgave us while still a sinner that is good news that's worth shouting about and jumping and running about and so thanksgiving is the next little thing in that acronym and thanksgiving is my sin is forgiven that's what the t is all about and one of the questions that is often asked from people about this little grid what is the difference between adoration and thanksgiving because we had adoration at the

[15 : 07] beginning now we got thanksgiving and we we said this we've said something like god you're amazing i adore you for being good to me then later we said thank you for being so good to me seems kind of the same thing but there is a difference that's really important the thanksgiving that this grid is talking about is specifically the thanksgiving that is the response to grace thanksgiving is thanks for what he has done for us it's like when you go to someone's house for a meal and they bring you a steak they've just cooked on the barbecue and bring it over to you and you say thank you so much for what you've done that's exactly what's going on here adoration is about who god is who his character is who his nature is but actually that's bad news it's not good news for us because we we sinners and he's holy and pure and amazing and so thanksgiving comes with the realization that jesus christ the holy one was holy on our behalf he took our place he brought holiness for us he brought cleansing from our sins for us so that we could be called holy so that we could come into god's presence so that we could be forgiven and enjoy this amazing relationship with him that's the gospel and that's what we need every day in our lives it's the christian's daily bread it's not redundant it's not unimportant and i think perhaps the tea is the most important part of this little acne room but then you need to believe the gospel that jesus has saved you in spite of your sin god never stopped loving you in the middle of your sin gospel rushes in meets a broken sinner with the flood of grace and there's this church tradition called communion many of you know about it many of you participate in that and it's the it's the lord's supper and one of the names given to it is eucharist and the greek word eucharist means thanksgiving so when you get to the t in the x grid it's like a little eucharist moment it's like a little communion moment we

come to the body and blood broken and shed for us the gospel that forgives us no matter what we've done thanksgiving eucharist we come to that grace filled moment with joy and praise and laughter and humility and we need to come to that place every day of our lives so the gospel is taking more and more ground within us again what if the passage you're reading doesn't mention Jesus or grace or the cross or salvation well usually if you look and dig around a bit there's something that points to salvation in the distance or or God's plan that's unfolding and and a good exercise for all of us and in in small groups you can hold yourself accountable to this is to look every day for gospel pieces in your daily reading and see if you can make a little list and start to grow in your understanding of that that even that is not the whole story that we find here if the passage only points out your sin don't stop there remind yourself of the good savior Jesus Christ and so you may be reading some historical piece of scripture it doesn't talk about your sin or anything but somehow somewhere in there there'll be something of God and let it remind you of the savior that we have and thank him and praise him and then the final piece Isaiah chapter 6 verse 8 says and I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send who will go for us then I said here am I send me so it's the last letter the S supplication help me God to live for you in the light of what had just happened Isaiah saw how big God was he saw how small he was and he saw God's unfolding unfolding plan of redemption for humanity

God was up to something Isaiah wants to be part of that in every way that he can and he says I want to live for you I want to be part of you I want to be on board with what's happening here give me something to do but I also understand that I don't have all the wherewithal I don't have the the spiritual power I don't have the the oomph to get this done I need your help I said I supplicate myself to you and it's the same for us when we receive God's grace it's this all comes on us the aura of the gospel and our hearts are fired up to let other people know our family members our work colleagues and people we play sport with we want them to know and we motivated Jesus use me in this but if we don't do what Isaiah says like Lord help me I need your power I need your strength I need your spirit to come and help me do that so supplication here is not just saying I want to work for you and with you it's also saying help me Lord I don't have the wherewithal to do this it's the confession that I can't live one day for you like I should unless you give me your spirit and your power it's asking the spirit to help you live believing the gospel live in light of how you've been loved it's asking the spirit to help make all this truth become a reality in our very everyday life in our very everyday relationships and this whole process the acts is just rehearsing the gospel over and over to ourselves many of us hear the gospel truth on Sunday and doesn't really make us gospel people on Monday you've got to put a little bit more work in during the rest of the week before we come back together on a Sunday on Monday we fail to repent or we fail to forgive and that's because you're you're the we we we're the worst sinners that we can imagine and we often not quick to repent because we're not growing in this gospel understanding and this love for the gospel why do we fight our spouse get into a whole big thing there and we we're so defensive and we take long to ask for forgiveness and saying sorry is not forgiveness you've got to say please forgive me babe it's hard to admit you're wrong so easy to attack they're wrong we always notice everyone else's stuff I have the sneaking suspicion that if we woke up every day I went and dug into the gospel we're reminded of God's holiness and our sinfulness and how he brought the gospel with grace to our lives and as we confessed our sin and repented to him that every day that happened in us little by little we'd become easier forgivers we become less less uh fighting with our spouses and all the other things that go on in daily life it would bleed into our very relationships at work and everywhere else where we live our lives if you want to be a good repenter in your family and your marriage then become a good repenter in your personal time with God let him massage his love and life into you we all know that we're supposed to to forgive just as we've been forgiven in Christ and why don't we why do we sulk sometimes why does it take so long why don't we just give forgiveness straight away it's because we haven't grasped fully our forgiveness and all that God has done for us and we're not constantly enjoying that forgiveness it's kind of from Sunday to Sunday instead of a daily thing that we enjoy we need to be fed by his grace daily God's grace has been poured out into our lives once and for all on that cross but we need to embrace embrace that grace and step into it and appropriate it every single day

if you read the Bible and come away with just a lesson learned or a little bit of new information about something that happened 2 000 years ago I think that's a fail if we believe the Bible is about Jesus and the gospel then we need to search out the gospel in the word and rehearse it for ourselves

using the little axe acronym all four of these movements are important and necessary we need to first see god so we adore him then we see ourselves our own our sin etc etc confession then see jesus and taste his grace and that brings thanksgiving from our hearts and then ask the spirit for help to live in that grace supplication of course another great aspect of the cbr is that it's personal and it's also worshipful but it doesn't just stay personal we do this in community together we share what god's saying to ourselves with all our friends and the other people we fellowship with and so in your groups it'd be great for you to get together and start doing these four little movements together with the passage of scripture and see how you go and um yeah let's be on this adventurous journey with uh the little axe thing that i've taught today