Welcome To BARAH MINISTRIES *a Christian Church*

Rory Clark Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...an intimate, local Christian Church with worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. At Barah Ministries we know this truth...that Jesus Christ is God. As the Lord He is 100% Deity...He is God the Son, a member of the Triune Godhead. He is also 100% human just like you and me, and His name is Jesus Christ. The Lord...God the Son...became flesh...Jesus Christ...and lived among us. He is the uniquely born One...100% God and 100% man in one Person forever. He is the Sovereign God of the Universe...and He is the Jewish Messiah. He was not sent to judge the world, but that the world would be saved though Him. He died on a Cross to make the ONLY perfect payment for sin. As a result of His victory at the Cross we are fully forgiven and forever forgiven of our sins.

As those who make Barah Ministries our spiritual home, we are Christians. Being a Christian means we believe in the DEITY of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with Him. Christianity is a relationship, not a religion...and the Lord Jesus Christ is a Person. He is not a "thing" ... and He is not a concept to us. Just as we do with anyone whom we love, we spend time getting to know the Lord. Since the Bible is His exact thinking, we come together to learn His mind through the study of His Word.

God has an enemy, Satan, "the ruler of this world." He is a liar who deceives the whole world, including you. He does not want you to get to know God, and he interferes with your chance to know God.

The Word of God is the truth that keeps us aware of Satan's insidious deceptions. As believers in Christ, in union with Christ, we have the victory over Satan through our Lord, who has overcome the world.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON Blank

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Galatians, Chapter 5, Verse 1...

GALATIANS 5:1

It was for freedom that the Lord Jesus Christ set us free...therefore keep standing fast in the freedom and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

This is the weekend we celebrate freedom in the United States of America. Do you remember when we had freedom and enjoyed it? Little did we know how easily we would be willing to forfeit our freedom voluntarily to fear of a virus. Yet we have. As we celebrate America's 244th birthday, also known as Independence Day, I can't help but think our founding fathers would be appalled with what we have done with the country. We are anything but "independent" and certainly not "united." However, as Christians we don't lose heart, because we know that we make a difference in this world, and we know the Lord Jesus Christ still controls history. Hebrews, Chapter 1, Verse 3...

HEBREWS 1:3

And the Lord Jesus Christ is the radiance of God the Father's glory...and He is the exact representation of the Father's nature...and Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...

As we do every Independence Day, let us be reminded both of what this country stands for and how it began by hearing The Declaration of Independence.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY SLIDE

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America...

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience has shown that mankind is more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object...evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism (tyranny)...it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has

been the patient sufferance of these Colonies... and such is now the necessity that constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let the following Facts be submitted to a candid world.

<A List of Usurpations>

In every stage of these Oppressions, we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

GOD BLESS AMERICA SLIDE

SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's hear some music! Our founding fathers, despite their imperfections, despite their sinfulness, and with all of their failures as human beings on the journey of life, still penned one of the greatest treatises on freedom outside of the Bible. It's easy to see how the Declaration of Independence was divinely inspired. As a tribute to our founding fathers let's hear the Gaither Vocal Band give a tribute to A FEW GOOD MEN.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

A FEW GOOD MEN Gaither Vocal Band **OPENING PRAYER** Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Father, let freedom ring...let it ring first and foremost in the halls of our heart through the direction we receive from God the Holy Spirit...let freedom ring...let it ring in our attitude toward others who are struggling to separate the truth from the propagandic lies of a deceitful media complex...let freedom ring as we think and speak Your Word to light our own paths, to live successfully in the kingdom you have placed us in...

Father, teach us to make a difference....teach us to be fearless in our communication of the gospel message...teach us patience with each other as the genuineness of our spiritual lives are tested...teach us to have compassion for those who are new to or growing in the faith...teach us to love others as you do...unconditionally...and teach us not to be complacent in this world...instead to show up as lights to the world...

...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON Idol Worship Exchanges the Real God for a False god

Worshipping substitute gods is not a small matter, and in today's world it is really easy to do. After all, even data is becoming an idol. There is more information coming at us that we can process as human beings. Yet even when we are obviously overwhelmed by the amount of data coming at us, we still want to process it all, even though we can't. It short-circuits our lives and sucks us into giving time to meaningless things. That's one aspect of today's idol worship.

Unfortunately, we have become so arrogant, first as individuals and second as a society, that we're oblivious to the devastation this overload poses, and how we are allowing it to rob us of life. As we study the next three chapters of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, our lifestyle of idol worship will come into sharp focus. As always, we can choose what we want to do about it. Let's read the first part of the next passage...First Corinthians, Chapter 8, Verses 1 to 13...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:1

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:2

If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:3 ...but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:4

Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world and that there is no God but one.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:5

For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:6

...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:7

However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:8

But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:10

For if someone sees you who have the knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:11

For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:12

And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:13

Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

The next passage we'll study extends from First Corinthians, Chapter 8, Verse 1 to First Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verse 1. As we study the passage, the subject matter must be investigated as a whole because it's easy to get lost if we don't keep the context of the passage and the context of the entire letter in mind.

The subject matter in this passage centers around a dispute in the first century Corinthian church over food sacrificed to idols. God's position on idols and idolatry is pretty clear in Exodus, Chapter 20, Verses 4 to 6...

EXODUS 20:4

"You shall not make for yourself an idol...or any likeness of what is in heaven above (things in the sky...the sun...the moon... the stars) or on the earth beneath (animals) or in the water under the earth (sea life)..."

EXODUS 20:5

"You shall not worship idols or serve them...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children...on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me (unbelievers)..."

EXODUS 20:6

"...but showing lovingkindness (God's grace) to thousands...to those who love Me and keep My mandates."

In First Corinthians, Chapter 8, Verse 1 to First Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verse 1, Paul is being indirect with the Corinthians as he unfolds the answer to a simple question, "Why can't we eat idol food?" We ask a similar question today. "Why isn't it okay if every once in a while, we choose not to listen to the Lord's direction, and instead we sin. Isn't that okay?" It isn't!

Why is Paul being indirect with his answer? Because unlike your Pastor, Paul would rather be persuasive instead of being coercive. ⁽ⁱ⁾ I prefer to just hit you over the head. I would say, "SRSLY? You're thinking about eating food sacrificed to idols? What a goof!" Paul is a bit more diplomatic. On occasion, allowing free will to think about a situation and then to make a choice is a lot better than being directive. Paul is a master at it.

When we return from our five-minute break, we'll take your offering, and then we'll finish up the background of this section of the passage before we study it.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK *NOBODY Casting Crowns*

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON Idol Worship Exchanges the Real God for a False god

The apostle Paul talked about giving more than any of the New Testament authors of Scripture. Yet never once did he mention the word "tithe." Instead, what he taught is that systematic giving...voluntary giving on a regular and predetermined basis...is the way Christians express their gratitude to God. I hope that you follow Paul's direction by giving systematically, voluntarily, and intentionally rather than under religious guilt and compulsion as an expression of your spiritual life and your spiritual gift.

Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with the offering message.

THE OFFERING Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

SECOND CORINTHIANS 4:4

... in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...who is the image of God.

OFFERING VERSE

MARK 4:15

These (the ones who are hard-hearted and indifferent) are the ones who are beside the road where the Word of God (the gospel message) is sown...and when they hear the Word, immediately Satan comes and takes away the Word which has been sown in them.

OFFERING SONG

THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU David Bauer, Instrumental

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON Idol Worship Exchanges the Real God for a False god

Welcome back! Let's finish up the background that introduces this next passage. What is an idol?

IDOLS

Figments of our mental imagination...often things that do not exist...that are thought to bring some benefit...lifeless things to which we give power and to which we extend devotion...always with a demon behind them.

What is idolatry?

IDOLATRY

The result of a mind led astray from the simplicity and purity of exclusive devotion to Christ ...the practice of giving homage to...offering devotion to...and worshipping false, lifeless gods while simultaneously rejecting the Living God...making a god out of something that is not God.

Like it or not, we live in or visit cultures where food is sacrificed to worship idols. There are times we know this, and there are times we don't know. What is the problem with food sacrificed to idols? Is it legitimate to eat idol meat? Truly, eating food offered to idols, because they don't exist, pose no real threat to Christians.

What were the apostle Paul's thoughts when he was around idols? Acts, Chapter 17, Verse 16 gives us a glimpse...

ACTS 17:16

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

It's maddening! Greece was filled with philosophers, the deep thinkers of the day like the Stoics (the triumph and tragedy people filled with self-sufficiency) and the Epicureans (the "don't worry be happy" people), who espoused and sold their viewpoints to the masses. They loved to debate with Paul. His teachings concerning Christ and His resurrection were totally foreign to these deep thinkers. Here are some thoughts Paul expressed to them in Acts, Chapter 17, Verses 22 to 29...

ACTS 17:22

So, Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects."

What is the Areopagus?

AREOPAGUS

The Areopagus is a prominent rock formation located northwest of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. It is more commonly known as the "Hill of Ares," a tribute to the god of war.

ACTS 17:23

"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship (idols), I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore, because of what you worship in ignorance (instead of worshipping the true God), this I proclaim to you (to help you be

clear). "

This idol to an unknown god was the Greek's attempt to be thorough and to not slight any god they were unaware of...you didn't want to make a god mad! Paul tells the truth...

ACTS 17:24

"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with human hands (like the pantheon of Greek gods do)..."

ACTS 17:25

"...nor is He served by human hands, as though God needed anything (from those He created), since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things..."

ACTS 17:26

"...and He made from one man (Adam) every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation (nations other than Greece)..."

ACTS 17:27

"...that they would seek (the One and only real) God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us (our God is omnipresent...an ever-accessible God)..."

God reveals Himself in ways that make sense to human beings.

ACTS 17:28

"...for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets (like Aratus) have said, 'For we also are His children.'"

These philosophers were so smart that they didn't even know that their very being...every element of their lives...were dependent on a God they didn't know or worship...that "unknown god" of which they speak.

ACTS 17:29

"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone (idols)...images formed by the art and thought of man." It's not at all unusual that Paul would be dealing with idol worship because it was prevalent in the day. What Paul is going to give us as we study this passage is practical suggestions for dealing with idol food when we are interacting with pagans. Since we deal with pagans all the time on matters other than idolatry, there will be sound advice in this passage about how to deal with other areas of our lives as well.

The most challenging part of being a Christian is the exclusive nature of it. Let's face it...we want to fit in. Christians don't fit in. If you want your relationship with Christ to be pure, free from the taint of the world, you are a freak. If you focus you are a freak. We don't want to be freaks.

Genuinely, **idols are designed to get you to forget about God**, and they work! When you are listening to the flesh, you are not listening to God. Temptation from the flesh is pressure to conform, and we do. We prefer the pseudo-"strength" that comes from doing what everyone else is doing.

This is especially a challenge for new Christians who have just left pagan worship, as with these Corinthian believers. As we grow...as we learn the worthlessness of idols through experience...we'll learn the simplicity and purity and clarity derived from everything being ONE with God. God is patient with us as we learn to deal with the issues of our lives, like idols and idolatry, and He overlooks our ignorance.

GOD WANTS YOU!

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

The closing moments of our study are the most important moments of this study. First and foremost, this part of the lesson is for the benefit of believers in Christ so you are always ready to give an account of why there is hope in you. Second, this part of the lesson is for unbelievers, so you can be saved...so you can be transformed by God from being a sinner to being a saint. This message is called the gospel, and it is good news. It offers you the chance to make the most important decision of your life.

There is one inescapable truth that is at the very root of Christianity...Christ. Jesus Christ is God. He is the truth in His very Person, and there is only ONE WAY to get to heaven...by placing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in what He has done at the Cross on your behalf. The bad news is that you were born a sinner. The good news is that Jesus Christ paid a price with His blood so that you can be saved. This message is your chance to have a personal relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want you to know that GOD WANTS YOU.

If you're going to place your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation, you probably should get to know Him as soon as you can. While there are many things to know about Him, here are the critical few things...

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign God of the Universe and the Savior of all mankind says there are two destinations for your eternal future...either heaven (the small gate and the narrow way) or the Lake of Fire (the wide gate and the broad way) ... described in Matthew, Chapter 7, Verses 13 and 14...

MATTHEW 7:13

"Enter through the narrow gate...for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction...and there are many who enter through the wide gate."

MATTHEW 7:14

"For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to the resurrection life...and there are few who find the small gate."

Which road will you choose for your eternal life?

Those who are on the broad way that leads to destruction may think there is strength in numbers, yet it is not true. Believing what everyone else believes does not save you. Placing your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ saves you.

The Lord Jesus Christ is 100% God...that's why we call Him Lord...and He is 100% Man...true humanity like you and me...that's why we call Him by His first and last name...Jesus Christ. Jesus says HE is the small gate... John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to the doubting apostle, Thomas, "I am the way (to salvation), and I am the truth (through the Word of God), and I am the resurrection life (eternal life)...and no one comes to God the Father (in heaven) but through believing in Me."

Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31 says...

ACTS 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."

Those on the broad way that leads to destruction place their confidence in liars. The Lord Jesus Christ warns you about them in Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 15...

MATTHEW 7:15

"Beware of the false prophets ... (false teachers) who come to you in sheep's clothing (appearing harmless)...who inwardly are ravenous wolves (out to destroy your eternal future)."

As ravenous wolves, false teachers rip your chance for a great eternity to shreds by deceiving you with a false gospel message. Proverbs, Chapter 14, Verse 12 illuminates the issue...

PROVERBS 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man (saving yourself by thinking your good deeds will earn your salvation) ... but its end is the way of death (the second death in the Lake of Fire).

God's enemy, Satan, is the sponsor of false teachers, false teaching, and a false gospel message. You have to be able to discern the difference between God's truth and Satan's lies...John, Chapter 8, Verses 31 and 32...

JOHN 8:31

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word (the Word of a true teacher), then you are truly disciples of Mine..."

JOHN 8:32

"...and you will know the truth (the gospel message)...and the truth will make you free."

Don't wait until it's too late to consider what road you are on! Mark, Chapter 1, Verse 15 says...

MARK 1:15

"The time is fulfilled...and the kingdom of God is at hand...so repent (change your mind about having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) and believe in His gospel message."

Who is this God who saves you? The apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus Christ...in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (Paul) delivered to you as of first importance the gospel message...the good news I also received ... that it was Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Scriptures...

The Lord Jesus Christ has a true gospel message...John, Chapter 3, Verse 36...

JOHN 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him." Another warning for those who choose the broad way is Matthew, Chapter 7, Verses 21 to 23...

MATTHEW 7:21

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven...but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven (by obeying the gospel message) will enter heaven."

MATTHEW 7:22

"Many will say to Me on that day (of The White Throne Judgment), 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name...and in Your name did we not cast out demons...and in Your name did we not perform many miracles?"

MATTHEW 7:23

"And then I (the Lord Jesus Christ) will declare to them, 'I never knew you...depart from Me...you who practiced (a lifestyle of) lawlessness.""

The will of God the Father is that you believe in His Son...that you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who choose the narrow way have decided that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone is the ONLY ticket to heaven...Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verses 8 and 9...

EPHESIANS 2:8

For by God's grace you have been saved through faith (in Christ for salvation) ... and that grace and that faith and that salvation are not from the source of yourselves...it is the gift of God....

EPHESIANS 2:9

...therefore, being saved is not as a result of works (deeds you have done in self-righteousness) ... so that no one may boast (about saving himself).

Get yourself on the narrow way that leads to an eternal life in heaven right this minute. Tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation, and that is the moment of eternal life for you.

SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's close with music! To the unbeliever, the Lord says in John, Chapter 3, Verse 36...

JOHN 8:36

So, if God the Son makes you free (through placing your faith in Christ), you will be free indeed.

To the believer in Christ, the Lord says in Galatians, Chapter 5, Verse 13...

GALATIANS 5:13

For you were called (by the Lord) to freedom, believers in Christ...only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh... but through unconditional love use your freedom to serve one another.

Here's June Murphy to sing...inviting both unbeliever and believer to bask in the glory of the freedom provided to us by the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...with her song CALLING YOU TO FREEDOM.

CLOSING SONG

CALLING YOU TO FREEDOM June Murphy

JUDE 1:24

Now to Jesus Christ...the One who is able to keep you from stumbling...and who is able to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy...

JUDE 1:25

...to the only God...our Savior...through Jesus Christ our Lord...be glory... majesty...dominion...and authority...before all time...and now...and forever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Thanks for coming! Thanks for watching! Thanks for listening! www.barahministries.com