If you're in the resident congregation turn off your electronic devices and put them away. Let this be a place where you aren't distracted by the world.

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. Welcome to this Bible lesson!

# **TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON The Ten Most Important Lessons in 22 Years of Ministry**

SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's begin with a song...the first song I ever heard June Murphy sing...let's follow its advice...the song is COME INTO YOUR PRESENCE.

## **MUSIC AND REFLECTION**

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

COME INTO YOUR PRESENCE June Murphy

<INSERT SONG LYRICS>

# **MUSIC AND REFLECTION**

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

COME INTO YOUR PRESENCE June Murphy

### **OPENING PRAYER**

*Let us pray...* 

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

Father, thank you for demonstrating sacrifice so that I could know what it is...the surrender of something prized for a higher purpose...thank you for sacrificing Your precious Son for the higher purpose of giving every one of Your creatures the chance to be saved...thank you for the spiritual gift You have given me...thank you for giving me the chance to operate in my gift within Barah Ministries...and thank you for all the challenges of ministry over the years...thank you most for the people who have been on my side with no pretense...true friends...people who demonstrate the qualities of character that come directly from Your Son working inside of them...and thank you for their choice to listen to what the Spirit is saying...

Let the next year reveal the entire Godhead to me in new and refreshing ways so that I can pass along Your goodness to everyone You send to me...

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

# **TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON The Ten Most Important Lessons in 22 Years of Ministry**

Let's begin with the last part of Colossians, Chapter 1...Verses 21 to 29...

## **COLOSSIANS 1:21**

At one time, all of you were alienated from God and hostile in mind (when you were unbelievers)...living in the sphere of your evil deeds...

## COLOSSIANS 1:22a

...yet the Lord has now RECONCILED all of you believers in Christ in His physical body through His death on a Cross...in order to prepare all of you and to present all of you before Himself as holy in His own sight...

#### COLOSSIANS 1:22b

...and as blameless (free from being targets of accusation)...and as beyond reproach (people without blemish...who are irreproachable)—

#### COLOSSIANS 1:23a

...if indeed all of you continue in the faith...which of course you will...firmly established and steadfast in your faith...and if indeed you do not get moved away (by false teachers) from the hope of the gospel message (of reconciliation) that you have heard (and responded to)...

#### COLOSSIANS 1:23b

...which gospel message was proclaimed to every creature under heaven...and of which I, Paul, was made a minister by God.

#### COLOSSIANS 1:24

Now I (Paul) rejoice in my sufferings for your sake (as a minister)...and in my flesh (the physical body) I do my share on behalf of His body (The Body of Christ)...which is the Church...and I am continuing to suffer what is still to come in the afflictions Christ provides.

#### **COLOSSIANS 1:25**

Of this church I (Paul) was made a minister according to the stewardship from God the Father bestowed on me for your benefit...so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God...

#### **COLOSSIANS 1:26**

...that is ...preaching about the mystery hidden from the past ages and generations ...a mystery that has now been made clearly visible to God the Father's (Church Age) saints ...

#### **COLOSSIANS 1:27**

....to whom God the Father willed to make known what are the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles...which is CHRIST INDWELLING YOU...the hope (the absolute confidence) of (your future) glory.

#### **COLOSSIANS 1:28**

We (apostles and Pastors) proclaim Him...warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom...so that we may present every man complete who is in union with Christ.

#### COLOSSIANS 1:29

For this purpose, also, I (Paul) labor...striving according to God the Father's power...which mightily works within me.

Today I am teaching my final lesson until January of 2023. For the last twenty-two years, I have taught the Word of God faithfully without a break. It is a pleasure to be a minister for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who gave me stewardship for your benefit.

It also is a pleasure to be able to take a sabbatical rest to get closer in my relationship to the Lord so that I can play a more important role in His kingdom when I return from the break. During my prayer sessions in the last month, since I decided to take the sabbatical rest, He has made it clear to me that I will be returning after the break. This is not the end. What form the new ministry will take is not clear except that it will NOT be in the form it has been.

For those of you who don't know, a sabbatical is a release from a Pastor's normal duties to study and travel. It's a suspension of normal activity. I am really looking forward to taking the time to allow my mind to become lucid again so that I can see the importance of this job clearly. January 12, 2022 marks my fourteenth anniversary as an ordained Pastor. A sabbatical is supposed to be an "every seven years" experience, so I am overdue for this rest.

I spent Thanksgiving in Coushatta, Louisiana...about twenty minutes from Natchitoches, Louisiana, the birthplace of my father. There is a retreat house there for Pastors who are burned out...Pastors who need a place to go to refresh their relationship with God in silence and serenity. God's leading me there to find this place is not a coincidence. I am not burned out...but life's nest has clearly closed in to blot out the sky. I need a fresh perspective on life and on this ministry.

In the past month, I have been reflecting on the changes that God has made in me in the period between June 1999 to November 2021. These are the things I want to share with you today...the most important things I have learned as a Pastor in the last two decades. This lesson was easy to outline,

but it's hard to write because it is about me...and this ministry has never been about me...neither in God's eyes nor in my own eyes.

My Christian experience has spanned nearly six decades. I became a Christian when I was eight years old. I was evangelized by men in an ice cream truck who came to my neighborhood. They offered ice cream and signed up all who were interested in a mail-order evangelism program. It was fun to get notes from them in the mail every week in which they shared the gospel message. I accepted the notion that believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for my salvation would save me.

It's ironic that the letter we are studying as I depart for sabbatical, Paul's letter to the Colossians, details exactly what I experienced at the beginning of my Christian experience. As soon as I became a believer in Christ... Satan...the enemy of God...sent in false teachers with false teaching to pervert my experience. As a result, I spent nearly five decades under the influence of Roman Catholicism and Systematic Theology.

What I'll share with you is a few aspects of my learning. I am sure if you do a similar reflection of your last two decades, you'll see several changes in yourself if you have been a faithful student of the Word of God during that time. What is clear to me is that the changes made in me were made by God, and had little to do with my own works.

## **LEARNING #1**

Jesus Christ is God

There is a big difference between knowing ABOUT God and knowing God. Back in 1999, when I started Barah Ministries from my dining room table, I knew *about* God, but I didn't know God. The Lord Jesus Christ was a concept to me...not a Person I could get to know...not a Person who knows me. He was slogan..."Jesus Christ is my personal Savior." "Jesus Christ died for my sins."

Today, the Lord Jesus Christ is my best friend. We meet every day to start my day. We talk every day. It is clear to me that He is the One who is directing my path straight. When I meet the Lord face-to-face at the moment of my physical death...when I close my eyes in this life and open

my spiritual eyes in eternity, I will not be meeting the Lord for the first time. I will know the Person I am meeting.

Today I know for sure that the Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure in human history and the central figure in my life. As the prophet reveals in Isaiah, Chapter 45, Verse 5...

## ISAIAH 45:5

"I am the Lord and there is no other Lord...besides Me there is no other God."

There is only one God. Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship with Christ, and I am pleased to have this relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe. These aren't just words to me anymore...it's real.

### **LEARNING #2**

The Bible is THE Inerrant Source of Absolute Truth

The Bible contains no lies and no contradictions. It's not just a bunch of stories made up by a bunch of guys who were sitting around writing their thoughts. It is not just a book. It is not out of date.

What a gracious God we have who would give us His exact thinking in writing so we can be crystal clear what He thinks. We can inspect His thoughts...we can meditate on His thoughts...we can test His thoughts for accuracy...we can move from confusion to clarity to confidence by knowing His Word. <GHOSTS>

I started out my Christian experience with a Bible...but then the thoughts of men infiltrated and perverted the truth with lies and false perspectives. I am clear that man's perspective most of the time is NOT the same as God's perspective. In the last two decades, I've learned that teaching the Word of God verse-by-verse from God's perspective and not from man's perspective is key to getting to know the Lord. Second Timothy, Chapter 3, Verses 16 and 17 say...

## SECOND TIMOTHY 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed...and is profitable for teaching...for reproof... for correction...for training in righteousness...

## SECOND TIMOTHY 3:17

...so that the man of God may be mature...totally equipped for every good work.

As the apostle Peter illuminates in Second Peter, Chapter 1, Verses 20 and 21...

## **SECOND PETER 1:20**

...know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own private interpretation...

# SECOND PETER 1:21

...for no prophecy of Scripture was ever made by an act of human will...but men guided by God the Holy Spirit spoke directly from the EXACT thinking of THE God...the Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowing God's exact thoughts and His exact will is priceless, especially when it is not tainted by human misperceptions.

# **LEARNING #3**

God is Responsible for My Advance to Spiritual Maturity

I am not. Only through Biblical study do we mature spiritually. Bible study indicts false teachers and false teaching. The apostle Paul distinguishes the mature from the immature in First Corinthians, Chapter 3, Verse 1...

# FIRST CORINTHIANS 3:1a

And so I (Paul), brethren (fellow believers in Christ), could not speak to you as I would speak to spiritual persons (people who are mature believers in Christ) ...

# FIRST CORINTHIANS 3:1b

...but I have to speak to you as if I am speaking to men of flesh (carnal believers...those who are immature)...as if I am speaking to infants in union with Christ.

The amount of false propaganda Satan inundates us with to distract us from the truth is mind-boggling. The Christian who says, "I don't have to go to

church to worship God" is an absolute idiot. There is ABSOLUTELY NO WAY you can learn about God without the help of a professional who is trained to lead you into all the truth. When you find a person who is capable in this area, you'd be a fool to let him go. Of this, I am sure.

While I am on a sabbatical, I am turning you over to the care of Pastor John Farley. I want you to study his Gospel of John series of lessons. The apostle John's gospel focuses on the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what I'll be studying while I'm gone. I recommend you do the same.

Two books will help you with this study...BE TRANSFORMED by Warren Wiersbe and BE ALIVE by Warren Wiersbe. They will be great supplements to Pastor John's teaching. They are readily available at Amazon.

### **LEARNING #4**

God's Has an Unchanging Viewpoint Toward His Creatures

God's eyes see us through the lens of unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace. We are loved without condition...First John, Chapter 4, Verse 8...

#### FIRST JOHN 4:8

The one who does not love unconditionally does not know the Lord, for the Lord IS unconditional love (it's His Person and His identity).

We are forgiven from eternity past for every sin we ever commit...past, present, and future...Isaiah, Chapter 43, Verse 25...

## **ISAIAH 43:25**

"I, even I (the Lord), am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake...and I will not remember your sins."

God is gracious when we make mistakes...and we don't have to work to please Him...Romans, Chapter 11, Verse 6 says...

#### ROMANS 11:6

But if salvation is by grace, and of course it is, it is no longer on the basis of your works...otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Grace is not a free gift if you have to work for it. God is not disappointed with us. God does not hold our past against us. God is not a God of partiality...He doesn't see social status, or race, or gender. When we meet Him, He is not going to throw our paid for sins up in our faces.

### **LEARNING #5**

God has an Enemy...Satan...Who Does Not Want Us to Get to Know God

Our enemy has many titles in the Bible...Satan...the evil one...the tempter...the destroyer...the deceiver...the great dragon who deceives the whole world...the serpent who leads the world astray...the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience...and the prince of the power of the air, to name a few.

The Greek word that describes Satan is *diabolos* which means "slanderer." Satan caused all the angels to turn on the Lord by trafficking slander about the Lord amongst the angels. Ezekiel, Chapter 28, Verse 18...

## **EZEKIEL 28:18**

"By the multitude of your iniquities...in the unrighteousness of your trade (the Hebrew word rakal which means going about from one to another trafficking slander against someone)...you (Satan) profaned your sanctuaries..."

Satan is very convincing. In fact, he convinces all of us to do the same thing he did...to traffic slander (which is oral defamation of a person's character). The Lord describes His enemy to a group of unbelieving Jews in John, Chapter 8, Verse 44...

## JOHN 8:44

You are of your father the devil...and you want to carry out the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and he does not tell the truth...because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks, he lies...and lies are his native language...because he is a liar and he keeps on fathering lies.

Satan's greatest deception is convincing the world that he does not exist... and he is quite good at deceiving. A book I recommend for study in the next year is LIVE NO LIES by John Comer...a book that discusses ways to

recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace...the devil, Satan's world system of thought, and the flesh resident in your body.

Satan's strategy against the human race is religion, a deception he designs to make us antagonistic or indifferent to God. There are billions of people involved in religion...well-meaning people who think they are saved when they might not be. Many are worshipping a counterfeit Jesus. The apostle Paul warns us to beware in Second Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verse 4...

# SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:4

... *if (1) someone comes and preaches another Jesus (a counterfeit Jesus) whom we have not preached about...and, of course, they do* 

False teachers offer both a counterfeit Jesus and a counterfeit gospel message...and as Paul says sarcastically in the Second Corinthian passage "we bear it beautifully" ... we are completely tolerant of false teachers and false teaching to our own destruction. When we return from the break, we'll take the offering, and then we'll hear about the other five lessons from the past twenty-two years.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK NOBODY Casting Crowns

# **TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON** The Ten Most Important Lessons in 22 Years of Ministry

This is a sixty-thousand-dollar ministry. Even though I am away, the bills of the ministry will continue. We appreciate your continued support of the ministry in the coming year. Our facility will remain an obligation...we have to pay its rent. My modest salary and other bills are still part of the obligation of the ministry. You can contribute via PayPal, or check, or the website, or the APP. Thanks in advance for your continued support.

Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with one of his always inspiring offering messages.

THE OFFERING Deacon Denny Goodall

# **OFFERING VERSE**

#### GALATIANS 5:16

But I (Paul) say, keep on walking by the guidance and power of God the Holy Spirit...and you cannot carry out the desire of the flesh.

# **OFFERING VERSE**

## GALATIANS 5:17

For the flesh sets its desire against God the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit sets its desire against the flesh...for these are in opposition to one another...so that you may not do the things that you please.

## **OFFERING SONG** *FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES Larnelle Harris*

# **TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON** The Ten Most Important Lessons in 22 Years of Ministry

## **LEARNING #6**

The Gospel Message is of Primary Importance for Pastors and for Christians

This was the shock of my life fifty years into my Christianity when I finally studied the most important book in Biblical Christianity...Paul's letter to the Romans. I was sitting around waiting for God to provide a person to the ministry who has the gift of evangelism. I learned that EVERY Christian has the responsibility to evangelize. Matthew, Chapter 28, Verse 19 says...

#### **MATTHEW 28:19**

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...

If you are going to be effective at evangelizing...inviting others to the Christian Way of Life by providing them with the gospel message...every Christian must commit these verses to memory...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."

All humans are here on earth to make a simple choice...the choice for or against a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 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...and no one comes to God the Father (in heaven) but through believing in Me."

Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31...

## ACTS 16:31

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

The gospel message is VITAL...and it must be on the tip of the tongue of every believer in Christ. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

## FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (Paul) delivered to you as of primary importance the gospel message I also received...that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Old Testament 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 Old Testament Scriptures...

If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, He is just another dead human martyr. Well sorry to disappoint some...He is God...death could not hold Him. Everyone I meet is going to get the gospel message from me for the rest of my life. I intend to ALWAYS be prepared to share the gospel message IN WRITING.

When we share the gospel message, we look back at the Cross and we get a vivid and constant reminder of what the Lord did for us there.

### **LEARNING #7**

Once You Have Salvation You Cannot Lose It

Because God accomplished my salvation, and because He never changes His mind, I've learned that I am saved once and for all time. In John, Chapter 10, Verse 28, the Lord says...

### JOHN 10:28

"...I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give eternal life to believers in Christ...and they will never perish...and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

I used to be incessantly worried that I could do something to lose my salvation. I didn't know God well enough to know that He would NEVER let that happen. Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 38 and 39...

## ROMANS 8:38

For I (Paul) am convinced that neither death nor life...nor (elect) angels nor principalities (demons...fallen angels)...nor things present nor things to come...nor powers...

## ROMANS 8:39

...nor height, nor depth...nor any other created thing...will be able to sever us believers in Christ from the unconditional love of God the Father...who is for us through our union with Christ Jesus our Lord.

The comfort of knowing exactly what's next when I leave this life is a freedom beyond description.

## **LEARNING #8**

Without a Prayer Life It's Almost Impossible to Get to Know God

I'm embarrassed to say that this is the first year of my life when I have taken my prayer life seriously. I've always prayed, but I seldom set aside dedicated, uninterrupted, and scheduled time to be with the Lord in prayer. It's an invaluable part of every day. With a book to read, with the Bible, with a notepad, and with a pen in hand, I visit with the Lord at least an hour

every day. Prayer is so relaxing and so power-infusing that I would never want to miss a daily session again. In John, Chapter 16, Verse 23 the Lord says...

## JOHN 16:23

*Truly, truly, I say to you...whatever you ask God the Father in My name...He will give it to you.* 

Two books I recommend for beginning your prayer life...2 Chairs by Bob Beaudine and Draw the Circle by Mark Batterson. Many of you will be getting the 2 Chairs book from me very soon...and many of you have received the Draw the Circle book from me in the recent past. Through the newsletter, I'll be sharing the way I conduct my own prayer sessions so that from an example you can develop your own unique way of praying.

# LEARNING #9 God is as Responsible for My Sanctification as He is for My Salvation

After we embrace The Christian Way of Life, salvation, we transition to the Christian Way of Living, sanctification. I have learned that God is responsible for my sanctification.

In preparation for the sanctification portion of our Christian lives, God gives us a spiritual gift. I have learned that the gift involves not sitting on our asses doing nothing, which Systematic Theology promoted. My spiritual gift is the gift of Pastor-Teacher, and it was apparent to me very early in my life that a teacher is WHO I AM in my person as an identity, and not just something I do. Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verses 11 to 13...

## **EPHESIANS 4:11**

And the Lord Jesus Christ gave (gifted people to the Church)...some as apostles...and some as prophets...and some as evangelists...and some as Pastors and teachers...

## **EPHESIANS 4:12**

...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry (each having his own ministry)...for the building up of the body of Christ (The Church)...

#### EPHESIANS 4:13

...until we all operate with the unity of the faith...and until we all know the Son of God in a mature way...until we all measure up to the stature which is the same stature of fullness as Christ exhibits.

We are to be exact reflections of Christ.

What is sanctification? God sets His believers in Christ apart for a series of mind-boggling blessings. Romans, Chapter 6, Verses 17 to 19...

#### ROMANS 6:17

Thanks be to God the Father that though you WERE slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed (the gospel message...salvation by faith alone in Christ alone... the Christian Way of Life)...

#### ROMANS 6:18

...and having been freed from sin (we died to the sovereignty of sin with Christ at the Cross)...you became slaves of righteousness (The Christian Way of Living).

#### ROMANS 6:19a

I (Paul) am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness (when you were unbelievers)...

#### ROMANS 6:19b

...resulting in further lawlessness...so now (as believers in Christ) present your members as slaves to righteousness...resulting in sanctification.

God saved me. God sanctifies me. He does all the work in both phases of my life, and He doesn't really need my help in either phase.

<EXAMPLE: THE MOVING WALKWAY AT THE AIRPORT...WALK IN GRACE...WALLOW IN SIN...BE STUCK IN THE LAW>

# LEARNING #10 God the Holy Spirit Produces the Fruit in Us

God the Holy Spirit was sent to be our guide...in John, Chapter 16, Verse 13 the Lord says...

#### JOHN 16:13

...when He...God the Holy Spirit of truth comes (whom I am sending to you)...He will guide you believers in Christ into all the truth...

Using the truth, God the Holy Spirit produces fruit in us. Galatians, Chapter 5, Verses 22 to 25...

#### **GALATIANS 5:22**

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace (in yourselves)...patience, kindness, and goodness (toward others)...

#### GALATIANS 5:23

... faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (in our relationship with God)... against such virtues there is no law.

GALATIANS 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

## GALATIANS 5:25

If (1) we believers in Christ live by (the direction of) God the Holy Spirit...and of course we do...let us also walk by (the direction of) God the Holy Spirit.

Galatians, Chapter 5, Verse 16...

GALATIANS 5:16 But I (Paul) say...walk by (the direction of) God the Holy Spirit...and you CANNOT carry out the desire of the flesh.

In all the areas where I am weak, God is strong. I have learned to count on Him to do the impossible in my life. If I have any chance of doing the impossible, I have to know this...Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 13...

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Thanks to everyone through the years whom God has brought to this ministry...and for the role each of you played in my growth. I look forward to delivering the payoff when I return.

## SONG INTRODUCTION

Because of what I have learned from the Lord through the Bible...I have no fear. Here's June Murphy to encourage us in song with FEAR NOT.

CLOSING SONG FEAR NOT June Murphy

<INSERT SONG LYRICS>

CLOSING SONG FEAR NOT June Murphy

# **CLOSING DOXOLOGY**

Words of Praise to Our God

Let's acknowledge the magnificence of our Almighty God.

ROMANS 11:33 Oh, the depth of His glorious riches...both of the wisdom of God and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how unfathomable are His ways!

## SECOND CORINTHIANS 13:11

Rejoice, brothers and sisters...keep on being made complete, keep on being comforted by God, keep on being like-minded, keep on living in peace...and the God and Father of unconditional love and peace will be with you.

# SECOND CORINTHIANS 13:15

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Let us pray...

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